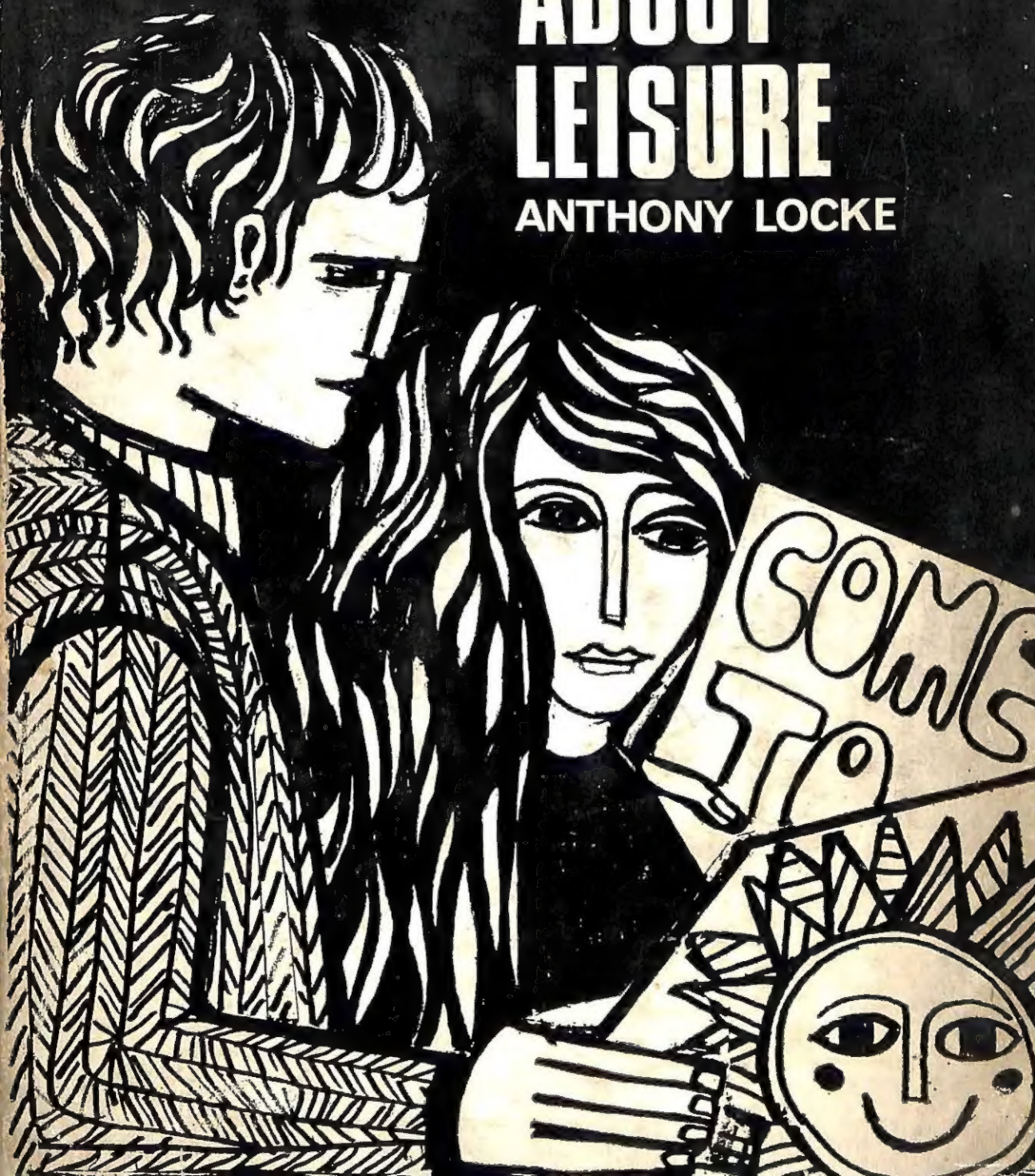


THINKING ABOUT LEISURE

ANTHONY LOCKE



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Young people are encouraged to examine the way in which they spend their leisure time and to think about what leisure facilities they require. Youth clubs of many different types are discussed as is the responsibility of the community to provide suitable premises and resources. Individual leisure pursuits whether cultural or sporting, the influence of the mass media, the change in leisure activities over the past few years and the problems brought about by increasing amounts of leisure time are among the other topics covered.

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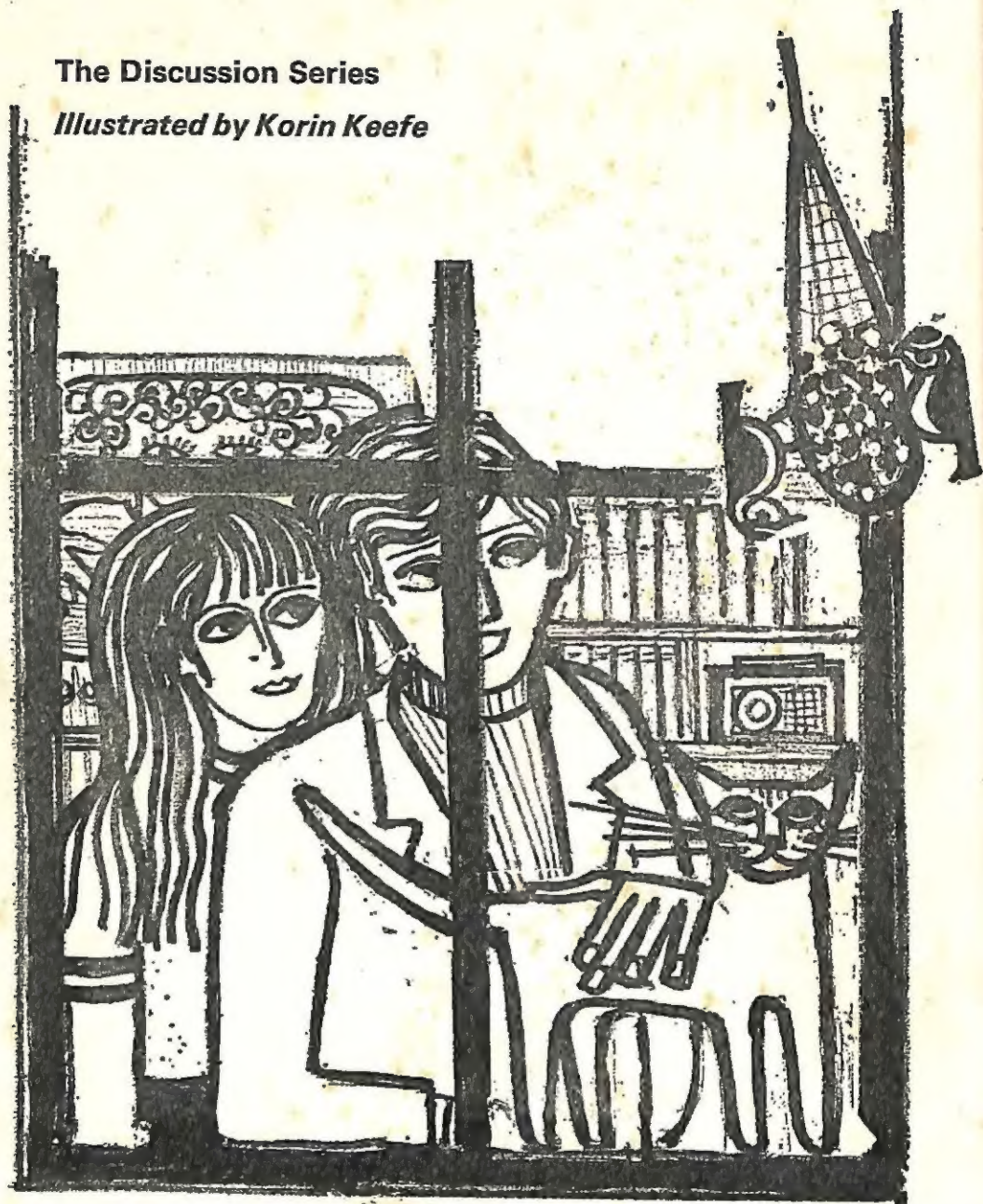


Thinking about Leisure



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Thinking about Leisure

Anthony Locke

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Cambridgeshire and Isle of Ely*



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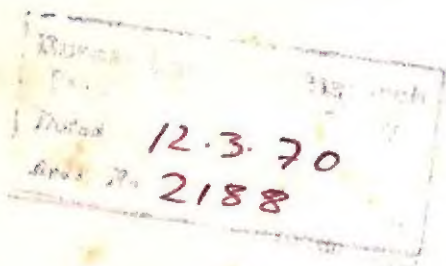
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Thinking about Leisure



'What are you going to do tonight?' is a question that you or your friends will certainly have asked one another at some time. You will probably have given different answers to different people. If your best friend asked then you may have planned what you were going to do together. If it was somebody you disliked then your answer could have been an excuse to avoid him or her. You may have enjoyed being asked by your friend because it means that he or she wishes to join you. Do you prefer to spend your leisure with friends rather than on your own?

There may be some people in the class who for various reasons are rarely invited to join a group. Perhaps you can think of times when this has happened to you. You will have wondered, probably miserably, how to occupy yourself on your own.

Few of your friends will spend their time in exactly the same way, though you may enjoy doing some things with a particular one. But from time to time you will have said to yourself 'I haven't got anything to do, I am bored', or, 'What shall I do?' Recently some boys were asked in court why they had smashed some shop windows. They told the magistrate it was because they were 'fed up'. Was this a good solution to their problem? If you often feel bored yourself you may wonder why. Already you may be answering 'It's because there isn't enough to do', or, 'There's nowhere to go'. Opportunities may depend on where you live, but people often make these remarks without really thinking about them, even those who live in towns where one would expect ample opportunities.

Adults don't always help by offering well meant but unhelpful suggestions. Two boys were wrestling in the street when a passing adult

grumbled, 'Two strapping lads like you ought to be doing something useful', and another shouted, 'When I was your age I was out at work, earning my living'. No doubt you have already risen to the defence of the two boys; they were wrestling because they liked it. But is this a good enough reason for wrestling in the street? We don't know why the adults made their comments, nor what their attitude would have been if the two boys had been wrestling in a sports club. We cannot assume, either, that these boys would have wanted to join a club. Can you think of similar examples where people have objected strongly to the activities of others which appear to cause little harm?

Do you object to the comment that they ought to be doing something useful? How 'useful' is wrestling may be a question you would like to discuss, but a far wider issue has been raised: the suggestion that you ought always to do something useful. This opinion is widely held about the activities of young people. Well, what activities are 'useful' and should you confine yourself to these?

You and a number of your classmates may do spare time jobs, working early in the mornings, in the evenings and perhaps on Saturdays, but there will still be a considerable amount of time left for you to choose what you want to do. You may find it difficult to accept that this is the time in your life when you are most free to choose. There may be things such as homework which you have to do. But you alone choose how well you do it and how much time you spend on it. Your decision may be influenced by what else you want to do on the same evening. If you want to go to a dance, play games, visit friends or watch your favourite programme on television, will the time spent on your homework be reduced?

You know that the choice of how you spend your time isn't always a simple one. Many things will influence it. What restricts you most—a shortage of pocket money, the attitude of your parents, or the lack of facilities? Which is the most important to you? Consider each in more detail to see how true it is. A popular song of some years ago declared 'The best things in life are free'. You can no doubt think of a long list of things which cost money but how many of the experiences which give you enjoyment are expensive?

Do parents influence the way in which you spend your leisure? When you tell them where you are going or what you are going to do are they always as enthusiastic as you are, particularly if what you want to do involves staying out late or being with friends they don't like? Do you want your parents to encourage your interests, not only in a practical

way by buying equipment which you need, but also by discussing them with you? Your parents may enjoy the same leisure activities as you. Your father may be a keen footballer or your mother enjoy dancing. Do you want your parents to take an interest in what you are doing without interfering? Or would you prefer them not to bother at all?

It is not possible for the author to tell you what facilities and opportunities exist for young people in your area. You may live in a small village miles from your school or in a large city. It is unlikely that you have ever made a complete list of the opportunities that exist and you may find it useful to do so. Even though you may come from the same town as your friends, you would probably include some items different from theirs. You might omit bingo clubs, riding schools, church clubs, golf clubs and music societies thinking them unlikely to appeal to young people. Some of you may have included these because you are interested in them or because you would like to belong. Others may have included only sporting facilities or just coffee bars and dance halls. The temptation will be to consider only the places where you yourself already go and things which interest you personally. If you discuss your lists together it is certain that there will be some activities which you may not have realized were being undertaken by members of your class.

Not so very long ago it was very rare for young people to learn to play the guitar, then an interest grew up which has developed into very big business and there are many classes for guitar tuition. Similarly, in recent years young men have taken a keener interest in their clothes, in some cases even more than girls have in theirs, but have boys joined tailoring classes?

Girls are now taking part in more activities which were previously considered exclusively for boys. Yet it is still rare to see them riding powerful motor cycles or flying aeroplanes. Neither activity needs considerable strength but rather sensitive control; and even where strength is needed for example in sailing and horseriding, women compete favourably with men. What kind of things determine these differences in interest? Is it just the difference in sex, or are women not expected to do some things?

Some schools have a reputation for being successful in certain activities; games, drama, music, chess, and have a prestige which encourages pupils to join in. It used to be a common practice to make everyone in the school play a particular game because this was a tradition of the school. More freedom of choice now exists, but there is still pressure

on individual members of the school to take part. Perhaps those pupils who enjoy these activities do benefit and may continue them as leisure time pursuits after they leave school. But those who are not so keen and yet are quite good at them, perhaps even representing the school, may find themselves with divided loyalties. Is there a temptation to go off to the seaside, fishing or window shopping, when the school expects you to be long stop and last batsman in the cricket or rounders team? Parents may prefer you to be at home helping with some domestic chore. If this arose, which choice would you make?

So far we have been concerned with group leisure activities. Examples may have been used which are outside your experience. You may be interested in reading, knitting, needlework, drawing or stamp collecting. These can be enjoyed entirely on your own, but is this enough? Can you really gain maximum knowledge about these interests without talking to other people about them? Perhaps not everyone would agree that you need to improve your skill in your chosen interest. Some people are content to follow the same hobby in the same way all their lives. One hears of the middle-aged man who only reads comics or the woman who always knits only articles of a very simple pattern. Yet they would consider that they were making the best possible use of their spare time and enjoying themselves. They would probably resent the suggestion that they should extend themselves, and it may be very difficult for them to do so even if they wished.

Although taking part in sports and activities has been mentioned, how much time is spent 'Standing on the corner watching all the girls go by', or having a gossip? How does just talking with friends fit into your pattern of leisure? At the end of the day you may say 'Cheerio' to your friend with the remark 'See you at the café' or 'See you on the green'. These might be places where you and your friends meet. You won't necessarily go there to do anything in particular. You will regard it just as a convenient meeting place. It may well have been chosen because it's a good stepping off point for other things to do, it will probably be the best place to see what else is going on in the popular areas in the village or town.

Do you spend any of your leisure time in this way and if so have you thought about the things you talk about, what you decide to do as a group, how you come to these decisions and why you find these gatherings enjoyable? Isn't there a feeling of being left out when you are not part of it? What brings you and your friends together in this way?

You will know that sometimes these gatherings take unpredictable turns. Incidents can develop where the group either starts ragging one of its members or turns its attention on someone outside it. In some areas there seem to be phases of this activity. It can be dismissed as high spirits or condemned as rowdy behaviour and you have the situation where some adults may ask questions like 'Haven't you got something better to do than hanging around here?' or the policeman urges you to 'Move along'. It may not be easy to see their point of view because your intentions may be quite reasonable, but not everyone will understand the real significance of your shouting, jostling and horseplay. Also, on occasion, the situation gets out of hand. Ragging and chasing in the streets can quickly and accidentally lead to a broken window or someone being knocked over. Usually only boys are involved in these groups although there may be one or two girls. Is going around in gangs like this an important or even an essential part of many boys' enjoyment of leisure? Admittedly, some may not join in. Why is this so? Is it because these individuals have found some satisfying outlet, whereas those who go around in a group are searching for something more interesting to do and keep together because they think there is more chance of the 'gang' finding it? Or are there real satisfactions within the group itself in friendships, joint activities, deep and rewarding conversations that are important to each of those who belong? There will be friendships in the group that hold it together. There may be one individual who takes the lead and most people are willing to follow because his decisions promise excitement and perhaps pleasure. Those who depend on him may not always agree with what is decided, but, unless they feel strongly to the contrary, they will usually accept. Is this because many who belong to the group don't want to make decisions? Or is it because they either don't know what else to do or don't really care how they occupy their time?

You may be thinking that, irrespective of whether you go around with a crowd of your friends or not you most certainly do know what you want to do. Just being with your friends in the group may be a positive and constructive choice.

2

Clubs



Are youth clubs the answer to the problem of where young people can meet? For some of you yes; for others perhaps never. What do you expect from them anyway? Most girls would probably include dancing in a list of requirements; many boys would want sports and team games. What makes a successful club? Does it depend on the number of activities offered? The complaint 'There's never anything happening at our club' may mean that there are not enough things to do. If this is so then shouldn't the members try to do something about it? Or are all youth clubs and voluntary organizations an adult plot to produce good citizens and therefore not worth going to? Should clubs reflect the wishes of the members? Do they? Are they run by the members, a club leader or a management committee?

'Youth leader' is perhaps a misleading term if it suggests an eager man in shorts leading a string of boys up a mountainside. What part should they play? Some young people feel that they themselves should be given the real responsibility of running their clubs without adult interference. They despair when having found suitable premises in which to form one they are told that in order to receive financial help from official sources they must have adult supervision. The reasons given are that adults will ensure responsible behaviour, look after the finances, safeguard the property and take charge if there are emergencies such as a fire or fights. Are not these precautions reasonable since the responsibilities involved can be considerable? But should adult supervision extend to decisions about the content of the programme, the policy of the club and who shall be admitted or rejected?

Voluntary organizations, particularly the uniformed ones such as scouts, guides, Boys' Brigade, Girls' Venture Corps have rules of membership which define not only ages of entry but also detailed schemes of progressive training. Most have in their rules or constitution sentences similar to the following: 'The aim is to encourage the physical, mental and spiritual development of young people'; 'the method of achieving the aim is by providing an enjoyable and attractive scheme of progressive training—guided by adult leadership'. The important question however is whether you want 'training', or is this what adults think you want? The voluntary organizations usually have carefully set out aims with training programmes involving the learning of new skills and leading to qualifications. Activities will often be concerned with the training programme begun by particular groups with a senior taking responsibility.

These organizations are single sex, although in recent years there has been a tendency for older sections to join with similar organizations catering for the opposite sex or for new groups to form within the organization. However most clubs and particularly those run by the Local Education Authorities cater for both sexes.

Training in the cadet forces includes a mixture of military skills and recreational activities. Some voluntary organizations have specialized interests such as farming, politics, music or religion. The amount of emphasis on a particular aspect varies with the organization but most of them will have social events as well. In all voluntary organizations there will be special aims. What are these and what do they offer young people? The best way to find out would be to draw up a questionnaire and then to interview representatives of the organizations. Part of the exercise should be to discover why the emphasis is on a particular aspect and what part young people have in the making of decisions.

The main difference between youth clubs and voluntary organizations is that there are fewer conditions in the former and the activities are not determined by a training programme. There are usually more social events and there is no obligation to take part in any particular activities.

The coffee bar is a popular club facility although if the club is small this may only be a refreshment stall brought out during part of the evening. There will usually be a membership fee payable annually or nightly. The cost may vary from 3d to 2s 6d a night, to up to £5 a year. What do you get for your money? Again this will vary with the club or organization. Have you made any comparisons? You could start off with questions such as: How often is the club open?; What activities are

there?; How much do I have to pay?; Are there any other charges?; How much freedom of choice do I have?; What is the standard of furnishing and how good is the coffee? Perhaps if, as a possible customer, you asked more of these questions there would be less falling off of membership and less dissatisfaction with inferior premises.

What is the difference in the approaches of youth clubs and voluntary organizations and do either meet your needs? Is it possible for you to draw up an ideal plan for a club or an organization—call it what you will—that will meet the requirements of all young people?

Whether or not you think such a club is possible you will know that many young people are dissatisfied with the present provision for them. Their concern may be how few clubs there are, how early they close and what freedom the members have. The first of these problems may be difficult to overcome because of the limited money available. Who decides what time a club closes—the members, the leader, the headmaster, a management committee or the caretaker? Many of the members think 10 or 10.30 too early, yet often clubs close before that. But how do you decide this issue? If a club is intending to cater for those aged between 14 and 21 then the length of time individuals are allowed to stay out will vary considerably. There will be temptations for many to stay on while the club is open and they are enjoying themselves. Should the club encourage young people to get home at a reasonable time? Or should it be open while members are about, particularly after the dance halls and the cinemas have closed, when you want to continue talking about the dance or the film? But should clubs be more than just a place to drop into for a cheap cup of coffee? Some adults see them as places to keep young people off the streets and the leader as a professional Pied Piper for delinquents. Some leaders of course may see this as their role but it is unlikely that ones who set out to change young people into model citizens will have many members.

If you accept that a leader is necessary, and you may not, what part should he play? This will depend very much on the type of club to which he or she belongs. If he is in charge of an open club with 500 members then his job will be very different from that of a leader in charge of half a dozen boys in a cadet organization or small church club. In the former he will be involved in considerable planning and organization, whereas in the latter there will be far more opportunity for talking individually with members. In the large club it may be difficult even to say 'Hello' to each member present on any one night.

Leaders of large clubs and organizations however usually have assistants to enable closer contact with smaller groups. They may act as instructors for particular skills or, and this is especially so in the open clubs, spend most of their time talking with members, getting to know their needs and helping them either individually or in groups. Obviously leaders vary in their approach to the work, some may be keen on teaching a skill and not able to talk easily with you about personal problems; others, although they may be keen on sports, may spend most of their time listening and discussing. They may well be the ones most willing to help if you want a second opinion on a subject which you haven't been able to discuss with parents or friends. But you know that you will get different types in all walks of life and a youth club is no exception.

What do you consider are the qualities of a good leader? If you do not like the leader you will not remain a member very long unless there are no alternatives or your own friends get on well with him. Only rarely do the members of a club choose their own leaders; adults, often in committee, choose him because he is considered suitable to work with young people. This can happen even in clubs that cater mainly for young people over the age of 18. Adult committees fear that members would choose unwisely and go for the rebellious young leader with views like their own. Wouldn't it be a useful experience to have to make this choice, even if it was wrong? How early though can you give young people responsibilities of this kind where public money and someone's career may be at stake?

It seems strange that so often young people allow leaders to make decisions without consultation. What is even more remarkable, they allow the leader to do the jobs which have real responsibility which they could easily do themselves, while the leaders create for the members jobs which have only theoretical responsibilities. You may have come across occasions where leaders insist on collecting all the subscriptions and handling the canteen money, because they feel that the job is too difficult for the members or they don't trust them. At the same time this kind of leader may send members out on night hikes and orienteering exercises, supposedly to teach them not only map reading but also self-reliance and responsibility. These seem a strange set of values but perhaps the fault is the members' as much as the leaders' in not asking for more real jobs to do so that they can really make the club their own.

You may well have seen examples of leaders manning the doors of clubs, waiting to enrol newcomers and virtually 'policing' the place.

Wouldn't you find it easier to join, or even enter a strange club, if someone of your own age was looking after the reception desk? It is easy to get the impression that some adults are running clubs not with and for teenagers but to preserve peace and tranquillity for adults. Some argue that this careful supervision is necessary. What do you think?

Leaders have the interest and welfare of their members very much in mind. The successful club is usually one where members play an active part in running the club not just being responsible for chores but fully involved in the development of all aspects of the club's life. Usually this is managed through a members' committee. Some leaders prefer to nominate their own members or through a careful process of suggestion obtain a committee of their own choice. Their reasons are that it ensures that the committee makes reasonable decisions or in some cases prevents their failing to make any decisions at all. You will know that committees sometimes won't work simply because people cannot agree or some members have nothing constructive to contribute. Assuming that a leader knows that he is not going to get an effective working committee from a free choice, is he right in selecting or helping to choose a more suitable one? What advantage will there be in having either type of committee? Do you lose anything in not being democratically represented? Is involvement in the organization of your own club life, the making of decisions about representation and planning your own activities, an important aspect of your use of leisure?

Some leaders are very good at involving members even to the extent of giving full responsibility to them for decisions about club discipline when misbehaviour or damage has occurred. It takes a long time to build up a well run committee and since most of the members will have had little experience in their schools, much time will have to be spent in discussing the issues involved in their formation. There may also be difficulties in working through initial problems, particularly if there are some uninterested or awkward members. You will have to decide for yourselves what the responsibilities of the committees ought to be. In many clubs it is just the programme. Shouldn't it be something wider like 'All matters of interest to the members?' Perhaps some useful starting points for discussion might be membership, activities, programme and discipline. These are obvious suggestions but what others are there? Again you might find helpful advice from groups like the Young Farmers' Clubs or some of the youth groups of political parties. These usually have strong committees often with many working subcommittees.

A more difficult task would be to discover why these groups appear to be much more effectively run by young people than many others. Is this because they have a proportion of people in their early twenties who remain full members or is it because they have limited objectives and therefore can agree more readily on action?

Is it sufficient to have opportunities and activities laid out 'on a plate' when you ask for them? You may prefer just to accept what is offered and not want to take part in choosing for yourselves. You will not be able however to escape various responsibilities that are bound to arise in a club. Such simple matters as the way you use equipment, how the time is shared out for its use, how you behave there, and how you treat the furniture. These may not seem important choices, yet the decision that you make will affect how you spend your own leisure time, and influence others in the club. You may well have come across examples of groups of young people who have entered clubs looking for trouble and very quickly disturbed the peace. Fights may have taken place, furniture may have been damaged or many people made to feel uneasy by the rising tension. You yourself may have been involved in such incidents and have seen how they affected the club atmosphere. 'Atmosphere' is itself a word used fairly freely to describe the various aspects of behaviour and emotional tension within the club—you might find it useful to define this more accurately. Is it just that on some nights people enjoy being in the club more than others? Is there shared experience which excites or depresses most people in the club?

Clubs in the main cater for the 14-21 age range and therefore there is a fairly rapidly changing membership, particularly if the club is a so called 'drop in' club where only a nightly attendance fee is paid. After the age of 17 many people lose interest in youth clubs. The girls tend to leave at an earlier age than boys, often in search of boyfriends who are older than they are. One author who questioned young people about reasons for finishing with clubs explained that some of the reasons given were that they 'just stopped going' in rather the same way that they 'just decided to leave' their jobs. The demands of evening school and homework had little effect on attendance; those who wanted to go along found the time. Several boys and girls stopped going when the youth clubs closed for a brief summer break, and 'never got round to going again'. Others got bored and wanted to try something new. Girls who were on the lookout for boyfriends knew that they stood a better chance at the coffee bar or dance hall than at youth clubs, where the boys were

in any case too young. Boys and girls felt that they were too old for clubs once they had started work; they no longer wished to mix with school kids. Clubs were in any case too much of a reminder of school, with their scrubbed floors, dark painted walls and thick white china. There was always an adult there watching over you. Several youths and girls stopped going to the club mainly because of unfriendliness and roughness. There were 'too many groups', 'a few cliques who thought the club belonged to them' or 'a rough crowd'. The girls now had no patience with uncouth youths and did not want to associate with them any more. Unwillingness to pay arrears of subscriptions was the reason for a few stopping their membership. This reluctance to pay reflected a widespread view that a person should not have to pay to attend a youth club. Even 3d seemed too much, if the hall was dingy and the entertainment slight. They disliked being organized; they wanted to be able to come and go as they pleased and frowned upon attendance at clubs which claimed 'loyalty' and 'club spirit'. As one girl said 'The woman in charge said I should attend regularly and not go dancing some weeks like I did. I didn't agree with that so I left'. Some indeed, regarded the local youth club merely as a useful standby for evenings when there was nothing else to do, when spending money had run low; somewhere to go when the only alternative was to stay at home. Much of the turnover in club membership results from their inability to settle down to one thing for more than a short time. They wanted change, something new, though new things in their turn soon became old and boring.

Many of these reasons could be readily accepted by you, or they may not apply in your area, but can you influence any of these problems? The comments about unfriendliness and roughness are not untypical, yet one of the most important reasons why you go to a club may be because of your own friends and your need to mix with people who have the same outlook as yourself. How can you combat these disturbing influences? Can they be overcome with members' committees? Or do they depend on other factors? For instance some contend that behaviour improves enormously in clubs with better fittings and furnishings, but there have been examples of these being wrecked within a short time of a club's first opening.

Not everyone wants to join a club. You may be one of them. In the official jargon you will be one of the 'unattached' someone who does not belong to a club or organization. It is an unfortunate term because it seems to suggest you should be attached. But why should you be? Do

some adults make the mistake of wanting you to hang onto the apron strings too long?

There is a trend now to send out youth workers looking for young people who are 'unattached'. They are often more interested in working with those young people who get into trouble. These leaders usually work in the commercial coffee bars or transport cafés. They may try to hide the fact that they are youth leaders. They think young people will be put off if they know they work for 'them', the authority. Are these leaders needed? Do you value someone taking an interest in you in this way? Would you prefer something like a teenage Citizens' Advice Bureau?

If some young people do not want youth clubs, would it not be best to accept it? Or is there a need for youth workers to get out amongst the 'unattached' to find out what sort of clubs they would like?

Very few girls go to youth clubs. Some were asked: 'If you had a million pounds to spend on the leisure provision of young people what would you do with it?' Many of the girls listed swimming, ice skating, ten pin bowling, facilities for tennis, cricket and football, coffee bars and cafés, clubs, dance halls, cinemas, tours and trips. Some girls wanted one club which would offer something for everyone including most of the activities listed above and some girls would provide each separately but all in one area. They emphasized the informal, glamorous activities. They were keen on social activities; dancing and listening to music were most popular. They liked special dances and being able to learn the latest ones and dancing with boys. They were very keen on trips to the seaside, rambles, weekend trips and the theatre.

One boys' organization claims that for at least part of their leisure time boys will want to be on their own. Then they can follow adventurous pursuits which they enjoy. One sixteen year old boy agreed with this view when asked how he would spend £10 000 for the benefit of young people. 'I would like to see a sports emporium, with facilities for every kind of sport for boys. The girls should have one of their own since they would obviously be a distraction from actual sport'. Do boys and girls want separate facilities?

More young people never go to a club or any kind of youth organization than join. Does this matter? Is there any value in belonging to a club?

3

The cult of fitness



You may know of someone who visits a gymnasium every night of the week to spend twenty minutes lifting weights. The sole purpose is to build the 'Body Beautiful' as displayed in coloured magazines—broad shoulders, rippling muscles, with the ability to snatch and hoist above the head ever increasing weights. The captions under the pictures suggest that people who look like this will have a constant stream of girls eager to go out with them. These exercises are supposed to produce fitness. The question however is fitness for what? For anything other than lifting car axles and heavy blondes?

Some girls have taken up judo very enthusiastically and regularly practise falls and throws. They justify this activity by saying that they enjoy it and it would be a useful defence if they were attacked by a man on a lonely road on a dark night. Or is it because they like to practise on the boyfriend? Karate, which has recently gained popularity, has appealed more to boys, mainly because its popular image consists of small men chopping house bricks in half with the side of the hand—an accomplishment one would think useful only for bricklayers.

All these sports demand considerable effort and individuals inflict on themselves gruelling exercises and even pain in perfecting them. Fitness and skill obviously cannot be acquired easily but is there any particular merit in pursuing them quite as ruthlessly when they appear to be of no use in other spheres of life? Overall fitness, muscle tone, health and hygiene are important but how do you justify the pursuit of perfection in such limited interests?

From time to time there are examples of even more specialized

activities which individuals pursue because they want to be different or achieve a record. There are records for marching, pole squatting, playing the piano and being buried alive. Each of these requires training and persistence which will stretch the individual's attainment, but is this enough? Are they of any value to the community and will human progress gain anything by these strange activities? There is perhaps some merit in finding how much the human body can endure in developing certain skills. Long distance walking may well be of use to the Army and to test cures for blisters, but duration piano playing will almost certainly mean the lowering of musical standards and is unlikely to be of use to either the community or the individual. Need these be useful to be worthwhile?

Some record breaking tests have scientific value and may well contribute to knowledge of how the human body works in difficult circumstances. Staying underground in caves or coffins will throw light on the reactions of individuals to being cut off from others or enduring arduous conditions. But not all these attempts are well enough supervised to give them value as scientific experiments. The more unusual the attempt the more likely it will be for selfish and not scientific reasons. Some people are prepared to take quite ridiculous risks to become 'the first' or endure the longest. Though many of the record breakers are dismissed as 'cranks', some gain popular acclaim and are recognized as having made significant contributions to human achievement. Few would dispute the endurance of Sir Francis Chichester in his singlehanded circumnavigation of the globe, Captain Ridgway and Sergeant Blyth in rowing the Atlantic, or the solo round the world flight of Sheila Scott, yet how do these differ from the achievements of the pole squatters and the cavers? Is it possible to compare one activity with another or should they be judged on how far an individual has excelled himself? The inclusion of severe risk adds enormously to the popularity of record attempts. Sir Francis was confident that he would succeed yet he himself admitted anxieties and fears.

The dangers and the individual's determination to overcome them appeal to popular imagination. But should the community allow attempts which involve severe risk to the individual? Some attempts have obviously been hazardous: leaping into the waters of the Niagara Falls expecting to be able to swim them is foolhardy, as is attempting to climb mountains without suitable clothing and going to sea in tiny boats without adequate preparation. Yet even where the risks appear to be

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insurmountable some people have the good fortune to succeed. Should they receive praise and acclaim or should these be reserved only for those who painstakingly prepared for a difficult task? The preparations of the single handed sailors, the Atlantic rowers and the Himalayan mountaineers are so thorough that it is difficult to think of them as leisure time pursuits. Yet in most cases they are, despite the need for professional advice, suitable equipment, the use of all the latest scientific aids and the vast expenditure involved.

Competition and determination to set up new records cause risks to be taken. In caving and mountain walking participants often attempt more difficult tasks than they have done previously and some, not unexpectedly, get into difficulties in caves or on mountain tops in bad weather. It is easy to dismiss this as 'bad luck' or 'their fault', but they are attempting to excel themselves. In many cases however, particularly with mountaineers, cavers, canoeists and dinghy sailors, other people have to risk their lives in rescue operations. Again they are often not professionals, but keen amateurs who have much experience and maintain a high level of fitness so that they can cope with extreme difficulties. They are ready at all times to go to other people's aid, but is it reasonable to expect them to turn out when the inexperienced have failed to prepare themselves or have taken unnecessary risks?

Competition in sport increases the chances for people to extend themselves. Athletes, swimmers and cyclists improve their individual times usually only when they are hard pressed by others. The desire to win can lead competitors to drive themselves too hard and to resort to stimulants to improve their performance. There has been general condemnation of these yet some athletes maintain that the use of drugs should be allowed because they only assist an individual to reach his potential. They argue that it is only another aspect of training and improving fitness. Yet the dangers are real—overdoses and over-exertion whilst under their influence can be fatal. Because of the risks should they be banned or should the individual be allowed to decide what risks he or she takes? Does the use of drugs alter the nature of competitions?

Sponsors of record breaking attempts are often manufacturing firms wanting to take advantage of the considerable publicity connected with a spectacular attempt. Many of those undertaking these activities will be obliged to rely on these sources for support. But if the success of attempts is of such importance ought not the Government to sponsor them, even though few individuals will be able to copy such achieve-

ments? The triumph of Sir Francis Chichester inspired others and proved the skill and endurance of one man to control and navigate a large sailing vessel for long periods of time. It has little direct effect—ship's gear may be made more efficient and easier to handle, and we may admire an old man's fitness, but is this all? Once a unique attempt has been successful, there is nearly always a sequel of further attempts to improve the result, and races and competitions are introduced. This has happened with expensive enterprises like the single handed races across the Atlantic and has long been established as a practice in cross channel swims.

Humans compete, but is this necessary? Those young people who will never be outstanding at sports are often made to appear even more inferior by having to run or swim in school events when they may have little inclination to race. They may be quite content to enjoy the activity but competition and the sense of failure may well destroy their interest. Do competitions reveal skill and endurance that the individual was unaware of? The prospect of competitions may dishearten some, particularly those who need their morale boosting. You may have seen a football match or hockey game where the unfit boy or girl, the fat or spindly legged, finds it difficult to play a full part and yet there will be strong pressures to do so. Remarks are made like, 'Come on Fatty, get a move on' or 'Those thin legs couldn't stop a double decker bus, let alone a football'.

Some are quite content to make the minimum effort. Should you be compelled to take part in sports and team games even if you don't want to? Pressure can be brought to bear in school to ensure that you do take part but is this the right way of encouraging participation? When you have left school the pressures will be less, but the needs, because jobs are often sedentary and your body gets less exercise, will be greater. Is there a case for introducing physical fitness sessions into the working day for the same reasons that some firms have found that productivity has improved when music has been provided? Would this evade the issue of making the individual feel responsible for his own fitness and make it seem even less attractive because of the link with work?

Does fitness contribute to efficiency; are reactions faster and endurance greater? If so, is it in the national interest to encourage personal fitness? The community provides, in varying degrees, facilities for recreation—swimming pools, running tracks, sports fields, parks and playgrounds, yet they are used mainly by the keen sportsmen. The majority fail to

take adequate exercise. Some of the unwillingness may be caused by linking fitness with violent and uncomfortable exercise and associating it with sweat, fatigue, aching muscles and discomfort. This has occurred, not only in sport but also in some camping, mountain walking and other outdoor pursuits.

People usually think of fitness as a physical state, yet in the examples that have been given, weight lifting, judo, karate, cycling, athletics and other sports, much of the success depends as much on attitudes of mind as on suitable exercise of the body. It takes effort and purposefulness to practise regularly and to continue when there seems little improvement or even a worsening of results.

Young people readily join together for games, trips to dances, hikes, camping expeditions. Is there the same eagerness to go to the theatre, visit a museum, spend an afternoon in a library or devote regular time to a hobby or an interest? Some people do these things, but they do not have the same popular appeal. This lack of balanced interests has worried some adults who feel that the young should be encouraged to think about their all round fitness. Some have talked vaguely about the 'whole man' and 'rounded education'. These have been translated into the idea that young people should, through leisure time activities, taste a wide range of physical, cultural, social and recreational experiences. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme offers to young people between the ages of 14 and 20 a balanced programme of leisure time activities with the discovery, development and progressive enjoyment of new interests and skills. If you do not know the details of the scheme, briefly they are as follows:

The activities for both boys and girls are divided into four sections, three of which are common to both awards, these are:

Service

This calls for training in one or more subjects such as first aid, life saving, fire service, mountain rescue, youth leadership, Sunday school teaching and home nursing.

Pursuits and interests

A wide range of activities calling for perseverance and sustained effort rather than the reaching of fixed standards. The choice covers such things as painting, drama, music, metal or woodwork, dressmaking, dancing, judo, fencing and gliding, learning to drive a car, sailing and rock climbing.

Expeditions

Journeying in small groups either on foot, or by canoe, small boat, horseback or cycle, involving at Silver and Gold stages being away from home for several days and nights.

The fourth section is different for boys and girls.

Fitness

In which boys have to reach fixed standards in athletics, swimming or physical efficiency.

Design for living

To help girls to become good homemakers with organizing ability and skill, they are offered a wide choice which includes cookery, flower arrangement, entertaining in the home and housekeeping and budgeting. They are also encouraged to make the best of themselves and to become well groomed, poised young women.

You may wish to consider whether it is wise to present young people with a scheme of work for a set period of time under adult supervision and testing. Is there a danger that this may be too limiting because your interests are specialized? Is it necessary to do something different?

Some object to having to qualify in certain athletic standards which may not prove fitness at all. Although the scheme is intended to develop individual performance and not to be competitive, some will find the athletic standards too easy, so unless they are really keen there is no need for them to improve their own attainments to qualify. Others have considered that it is unrealistic to tackle pursuits and interests for a fixed period of time as this will help to discourage continuing with them when the award is gained. A more general criticism is that the award of certificates and badges detracts from the purpose of the scheme. It will attract people who like to collect badges and certificates and who may not really understand the purpose of the scheme. There is no doubt however that for many, participation in the balanced activities has meant awareness of standards, development of new interests and, through the service projects, understanding of responsibility to society. What do you think?

Is there the feeling that adults are trying to plan ways of doing good for young people, moulding them, expecting them to conform? Do the methods also smack of playing games, and pretending to be responsible without having real responsibility? Some young people complain that they can't do things their own way. They would prefer to race their

motorbikes round the quarry or the speedway track rather than have instruction on road safety from the police. They would rather play football in the park than attend football training classes at the technical college. They would rather listen to pop records in the bus shelter than study music appreciation for six months. What do you lose by taking some activity, physical or cultural, seriously and under expert supervision? Is it just that you may lose contact with your friends, or are there real benefits from organizing your own pursuits?

4

Leisure and the community



Facilities for young people in the community vary from draughty village halls to purpose built premises costing perhaps as much as £100 000.

The cost of providing space for you is quite high and although you may not have seen many new premises there is still a big demand on the country's financial resources. Some people suggest that the money ought to be spent instead on hospitals, old people's homes, schools, clinics and libraries. You yourself may know of some of these buildings that urgently need repairing or replacing. Which do you think should have priority?

Should the community provide for the leisure time needs of young people at all? In some areas the provision will be by voluntary organizations. They may rely on substantial aid from the Government and local authorities, but shouldn't they be entirely self-supporting financially?

There has been a tendency to build separate premises exclusively for young people. Is this wise, or is it more sensible to provide them either close to, or linked with, other recreational facilities including ones used by adults? It is cheaper to build them on the same sites as schools. However, people think that because the facilities are on school sites you will be unlikely to join. Nor will you want to attend if there are too many adults there if you think that they will expect different standards of behaviour and will not understand you and the way you prefer to enjoy yourself. What is your opinion?

You will be leaving school soon to go to work or to a college for further education. Will you then want to attend a club on your old school site even if it is housed in a separate building? Will the problem

be different in sparsely populated rural areas where the school will probably be the largest building in the village and have the best facilities for recreation?

Some authorities maintain that it is important to provide facilities that can be used by all ages in the community so that they have the opportunity to meet one another.

Should the state spend so much money on leisure facilities for young people? £23 million was allocated for the Youth Service Building Programme from April 1960 to March 1967. This expenditure covered nearly 3 000 projects. During the same period 146 sports projects totalling approximately £2 million were granted by the government. When the youth building programme began there was some criticism, which still continues, that this provision was far too lavish and that the 'fun palaces' would not be appreciated by young people. Others felt that it was essential to provide 'a generous and imaginative building programme' to cope with the problems caused particularly by the activities of the 'Teddy Boys'. They wore long jackets, drainpipe trousers and thick crepe-soled shoes. Incidents where they were caught carrying knuckle dusters, bicycle chains and flick knives added to their sinister image. Should the community provide facilities to counter these and similar trends? Does the community benefit by young people having premises of their own? You saw that in a previous chapter there was unanimity in the survey of girls and in the Boys Clubs' report that better facilities should be established. But are these meeting the needs of young people who prefer the commercial coffee bars and the transport cafés? Should the provision of such facilities be left to the business men? Should the community merely provide classes and courses? How far should the local authorities go in making social provision? Should they concern themselves just with education? If social facilities are provided should clubs intended for those over the age of 18 have a licensed bar? Is this a fair charge on the ratepayers? Even if a bar is financially self-supporting, should public buildings be used in this way?

What should be the community's priorities when providing for leisure and particularly for young people? You may have already carried out a survey of the facilities which exist in your area. You could follow this up by asking a cross section of people what facilities they want in the community. This survey will only be useful if it is widely representative—it's no good just asking your friends.

Local authorities are allowed by the government to spend up to six-

pence from each person's rates on leisure facilities but very few do. Most spend only a small fraction of this amount. It has also been recommended that there should be six acres of recreation ground for every thousand people but the actual provision is usually less than two acres and even as low as two tenths in some areas. Do you know what these figures are in your area? You should be able to get the information from the clerk of your local council.

If there is a sports council in your area can you find out what schemes they are proposing and how much attention has been paid to the needs of young people? The most influential groups in these sports councils will be the specialized sports clubs who will be keen on competitions and schemes of coaching by experts. Yet many young people just want facilities to kick a ball about or improvise games where rules are minimal and introduced as incidents arise. Few sports clubs are going to be very enthusiastic about this attitude, most will be strongly opposed to it. Is there a case however for providing specialist sports facilities for young people where they can just 'let off steam'? Swimming pools are a very good example of where the needs of the enthusiastic competitor and those who just go for the fun of it often come into conflict. Whose claim should come first? Understandably the sports councils are agitating for better facilities and more buildings. Consequently many of the projects will be for sports halls, swimming pools and running tracks.

Because funds are limited there may be a concentration of many of these facilities on one site. If some sports clubs meet only one or two evenings a week it is a good thing to use the gymnasia or courts for other purposes for the rest of the time. The same applies to the use of school premises for evening activities of a recreational and social nature and of youth club buildings by schools for teaching purposes. Use of premises and facilities for two or more purposes is increasing. Difficulties can arise when one user doesn't understand the interests of another.

The community may assist in the provision for leisure in other ways. There are schemes to provide grant aid for sports coaching for groups and individuals. Young people can be assisted financially when attending a variety of recreational courses. You can find out about these from your local council or from the youth leader or officer if there is one. Quite often these schemes are very generous – 50 per cent or more of the cost may be provided. In the main however they are available only for courses which are considered of educational value. You could argue that it is very difficult to distinguish what is educational. For instance, should

the community subsidize young people to learn skiing in Switzerland or surfing in Cornwall when these could be seen as just holiday jaunts? It will be difficult to argue that the community will benefit from the expenditure on these courses, but perhaps not so difficult if it were a question of going to a work camp. Is it to society's advantage to send young people on holidays abroad, whatever the purpose?

Some communities are faced with special problems of providing for leisure. The seaside resorts have seasonal problems, sometimes unexpected ones. You will have read in the press, complaints about the 'invasions' of young people and the 'battles of the beaches' in the quiet and so called 'respectable' resorts of the south of England. They are faced not only with the problem of crowds of teenagers whose behaviour they do not understand and fear but also with the difficulty of providing accommodation for them that they can afford. One of the youth organizations has set up a makeshift hostel in a church hall in one resort so that the young people have somewhere to put their bed rolls but should it bother to do this? If young people do not make necessary arrangements and are prepared to sleep under the pier and on park benches why shouldn't they?

So far in this chapter we have dealt with the responsibilities of the community to provide for leisure but what are the obligations of people, particularly the young, to society? Newspapers often comment on vandalism in public places including youth clubs. Will people only use these facilities properly if good ones are provided and they have to pay a realistic price for them? Must we accept that part of the risk of providing these facilities is that people may misuse them? Various solutions have been suggested for these problems including compulsory National Military Service or work camps to occupy young people during their holidays. Do you think this would give your leisure more purpose and benefit the community by tackling problems that are difficult and expensive? These might include the removal of 'eyesores', such as derelict buildings, wartime temporary structures, converting wastelands into children's playgrounds. Would the fact that this was compulsory make the situation worse? In some areas these tasks are being done voluntarily by young people and you will have heard of organizations such as Community Service Volunteers, Young Volunteer Force, International Voluntary Service and Voluntary Service Overseas. You may have groups in your town with titles such as 'Task Force', 'Youth Action', 'Teenaiders' or 'Young Volunteers'. More and more publicity is being

given to the value of this work. There is strong pressure from some adults who think that young people *ought* to be involved in this service. But why should you be? How will you and society benefit? Should you expect to benefit personally anyway?

Most of the people who press for more of the young to be involved in the community point out that there are obvious needs in any area which can go unnoticed. Two authors suggest that you should study your local newspapers to see what opportunities for service can be found in reports of cases or problems. Even the advertisements may show you where there is a need that you might be able to meet. You may have to think round the situation that you read about to see where your group could fit in. For instance a hospital advertising for nurses may give you the opportunity to help relieve the pressure on present hard pressed staff by feeding handicapped patients, helping to entertain the less sick children or doing some of the simple chores that always have to be done in the wards.

They go on to list some typical examples of possibilities that might appear in the local newspapers. They make no suggestion that young people should be involved in service to the community – they assume that you will want to be and are only too willing to help if you learn of a need. They accept that young people are concerned about the elderly, the physically and mentally handicapped. They are urging that society should use this willingness in purposeful and useful ways. They suggest that you have a valuable role to contribute in helping not only lonely and ill individuals but also in assisting the essential services when there is an emergency.

They give an example of what happened during the freeze of January/February 1963 when every school in the Netherlands went into action so that no single elderly person living alone went unvisited. There were pipelagging teams, snow clearance patrols and food deliveries to stranded animals. They go on to argue that 'if some emergency should occur, for example, a typhoid epidemic, and the local authorities do not accept your offer of assistance – then raise hell, besiege the mayor, inform the national press and insist on your *right* to contribute to your community'.

There are two ideas here which you may challenge. First, do you want to get involved in real social problems and second, do you consider that it is your *right* to make some contribution to society? Is the former true of only a very few young people and that most really only want to enjoy themselves? Do you want to make a greater contribution to the com-

munity? If so, what is preventing you? Is it because the local authority departments and the local voluntary organizations have failed to accept that young people can play a responsible part, or is it that young people have not convinced adults that they have a contribution to make?

Does helping the old, the sick and the handicapped really give you an insight into the problems of society and a deeper understanding of human needs? Or does it merely give you the opportunity to 'do good' without getting to know simple problems which exist at home? Would you be rendering a more useful service in helping your mother with the washing up or your father with some carpentry, than a short piece of 'service' with someone you don't really know?

Is voluntary service an underhand trick by which the local authorities get young people to do unsavoury jobs which adults wouldn't consider attempting? Should many of these tasks be done by the welfare services?

5

Leisure and the mass media



Leisure has become such an essential part of people's lives that increasing use is made of it to draw attention to other things. Many advertisements concentrate on some aspect of leisure. You will recall the numerous examples of famous footballers consuming with relish various breakfast cereals, athletes and cricketers quaffing ale in village pubs and children bounding with limitless energy after eating bars of chocolate. Some are particularly effective in distorting the idea of leisure. For example a young man is shown sailing on the river with a packet of cigarettes in one hand and a blonde in the other, gaining satisfaction and enjoyment, so the advertisement suggests that if you go sailing you ought to take both a blonde and its brand of cigarettes.

Some advertisements may be about leisure activities, for example the sale of a boat, canoe, tents or sporting equipment. The tendency however is to use the public interest in an activity to draw attention to something quite different. The leisure activity may just be a background. The reader or viewer is therefore subjected to two main influences: the attractiveness of the leisure pursuit, whether it is cricket on the village green, beauties bathing in the Mediterranean or motorcycling round the Isle of Man, and the impact of the product. A glamorous version of the leisure pursuit is given so that you will feel 'relaxed', 'fresh', 'on top of the world' or 'out in front'. In reality, in similar circumstances, you could feel exhausted, stiff, sore, bad tempered and in need of a bath and hot soup rather than wafer biscuits, fizzy drinks or cigars.

Leisure activities are also used to tempt you into other things. One advertisement showed a boy and a girl enjoying sailing in a dinghy. The

inscription accompanying it was 'First round the mark' and underneath 'Teamwork builds the lead'. The advertisement was for careers in a national bank. There was no direct comment on sailing. You are expected to assume that these two young people were in the lead because of their teamwork. The sailors were represented as healthy, gay people, handling the boat with complete confidence, ease and comfort. You are intended to think that these are the sort of qualities that employees of this bank are expected to display in their leisure activities and in their work. Doesn't it promise too that if you join the staff of this bank then there will be ample opportunities for partaking in exciting leisure time activities?

Many employers see these as encouragements for people to join them and to stay with their firms. In the north of England there are experiments where youth centres provide leisure opportunities for small firms that can't arrange them themselves. Some employees have previously left these firms because they preferred to work for those that have football teams and sports clubs. The Armed Services too are particularly keen to emphasize the leisure opportunities and dwell on sport, sunbathing, swimming and meeting friends in many of their recruitment advertisements. Such opportunities are valuable but the emphasis of the advertisements may be misleading as to how great these are.

Newspaper reports and articles sometimes give exaggerated views of teenage leisure activities and behaviour. Very often their themes concern popular labels – 'mods', 'rockers', 'beatniks', 'flower people' which have been very useful in keeping up public interest. The headline in one newspaper recently was 'The Rootless Ones!' The writer, Godfrey Winn, went on to explain:

For this is my name for the growing army in our midst of young men and women, citizens remember, with the vote – who seem to have no idea where they are going or what they are seeking. I find it bewildering, and in a way terrifying. Don't you? Is it not rather self discipline that is required instead of a surrender to a sitting around session, handing each other flowers?

Rave carried an article: 'Meet Simon and Marijke of the Beautiful People'. They explain their philosophy:

It is based on love. The essence is love. Love will grow, spread

until the whole world is turned on to it. Love will not die. Everybody must turn on! . . . What is the ultimate? Paradise, living for each other. No dirty clothes. We will change back to country communities where money won't be necessary. We'll work for each other. Who'll do all the work? Computers. Eventually computers will show we don't need computers.

Is Godfrey Winn right in condemning these groups of teenagers? Is his description of their activities accurate? Is he merely stirring up readers' prejudices without evidence? Are Simon and Marijke too optimistic and not giving supporting facts? Each is trying to influence the reader. Have they succeeded?

Some newspapers dwell on certain aspects of teenage leisure because they make a good story. Almost every year there will be the summertime story of the behaviour of young people at the seaside. What does the headline 'Mods went in like vultures' which appeared in *The Times* report on incidents at Great Yarmouth mean to you? It went on to describe 'Sea front incidents in which a girl of 17 urged crowds of "mods" into battle, and another gang descended "like a pack of vultures" on five leather jacketed youths . . .' What is the effect of such a report? Are all 'mods' at the seaside and youths in leather jackets seen as a potential 'pack of vultures'?

Publicity given to trends in leisure activities and even clothing can be crucial in determining people's attitudes to them. For the motorcyclist leather clothing is virtually essential for warmth and it also acts as a very effective protection against grazing in the event of a fall. Yet many of the public automatically link the leather jacket with violence. The leather jacketed motorcyclist is always seen as the aggressively revving, fast riding, risk taking individual. Are these labels misleading? Do they create the impression of the 'types' where all teenagers in a certain form of dress are seen to have similar attitudes, views, motives and reactions? Is there a danger that once labels have been given then the individuals try to live up to the labels? Will the leather jacketed motorcyclist therefore behave like an irresponsible 'ton up boy' because this is what he thinks is expected of him?

You will know that the mass media are often concerned with trying to persuade you to alter your spending habits, your style of clothing, the type of food you eat and the beverages you drink. If you look at almost any newspaper you will see long lists of advertisements for holidays at

home and abroad, air, sea and rail 'package holidays'. These are normally featured at the appropriate time to interest people for the next season. Because the newspapers receive revenue from these advertisements they are willing to include editorial and feature articles about them. These, like many of the reviews of cars, motorcycles, and other goods that are tested, fail to include searching analysis of the faults and shortcomings. The attractions are pointed out but few of the inconveniences are mentioned. Holidays abroad are expensive and may well represent a whole year or more of careful saving. Yet sometimes the promises of the brochures and the advertisements are not fulfilled. The 'magnificent view of the sea' can only be seen from one corner of the room when standing on a chair, or '5 minutes from the front' presupposes that you are a middle distance athlete of Olympic standard. You can probably cite many similar examples of glib phrases that are just as misleading.

Some people favour returning to the same resort each year simply to ensure that they know what to expect. Understandably others will prefer to go to different places and perhaps further afield. Many of the advertisements concentrate on trying to persuade you to do just this. Since the Second World War and particularly since the general introduction of the jet airliner, patterns of holidaymaking have changed greatly. You are urged to 'Do something different this year', 'Go seek the sun', 'Try the romance of . . .', 'You are only five hours away from . . .' How does this vast amount of publicity on holidays abroad affect your leisure? Does it mean that you save so hard that other leisure time activities may be curbed? It's not uncommon to hear people say 'I've given up smoking to save for a holiday', even though the cigarette manufacturers would have you believe from their advertisements that smoking their products was almost a holiday in itself.

If you have had a holiday abroad you will be able to give some opinions on the reality compared with the promise of the brochures. If you haven't, then you should try and find out as much as you can from individuals who have been to the country you are thinking of visiting. There are many vital questions you need to discuss if you are going abroad soon, particularly if you are embarking on a holiday with a so called 'all-in charge'. Not all advertisements convey exactly what this means. There may well be other charges which appear to be optional but prove to be unavoidable. For example, 'including three meals a day' may sound satisfactory but it depends on the quality and quantity of

each of the meals. There could quite easily be additional travelling charges which you could not anticipate.

What value is there in going abroad at all? How do you benefit? Most of the advertisements either show sunshine or suntan, often irrespective of the climate. Few show adverse weather conditions; even when these are a significant and frequent feature of a country they are ignored. You may argue that snow is often shown in many of the photographs of winter resorts, but it is very rarely shown falling. Some people are very disappointed because their holidays didn't turn out as they expected. Yet the advertisements may well have led them to expect something quite different from what is normal at a particular time of the year.

Advertisements of new techniques in some leisure activity or skill that can be learned in your spare time always make them look so easy. You may be familiar with some that sound or read like the following: 'You can learn to dance in an evening with . . .' 'Amaze your friends and play the guitar after only 4 hours of lessons', 'Expand that puny chest and stay fit with 5 minutes of Grippo exercises each day'. With a swift glance at the columns of some of the cheaper magazines you can add to this list. How do you select the genuine offers from the exaggerated claims? This can be very difficult because 5 minutes with a 'Grippo Apparatus' could, if used every day, achieve what it states. If you read the wording carefully it doesn't promise very much. Equally, of course, if the apparatus is to achieve any results at all it could be so exhausting that you would soon stop using it. Even a 'seven days free trial' may not help you realize how demanding routine use may be. But at least you could test it.

Quick ways of learning to play music are one of the favourite themes of some of the advertisements. They never explain that you will be taught only a few notes or chords. They may urge you to practise regularly but they ignore the extreme difficulties of learning accurately and sensitively without someone to listen and correct the mistakes. The discipline of conforming to standards set by others is one of the vital aspects which any of these quick 'do it yourself' or 'self tutor' techniques lacks. Are there no short cuts to mastering difficult arts or skills? If not why do such a large number of people respond to these advertisements?

There is another aspect of this problem of getting accurate information, which in some ways can be as disappointing as the deliberately misleading advertisements. This is the impression which can be gained, through films and television, of the ease with which an expert appears

to achieve this result. If you watch a bowman or a marksman score bulls-eyes without fail and without apparent effort, it is easy to imagine that you will find it just as simple. The issue becomes even more confused when you see an advertisement with the champion announcing that he owes his success to a 'Basher' racket or a 'Nevermiss' rifle. Another complication can be that another champion may acclaim the debt he owes to a particular beverage or vitamin pill. You may laugh and say that people are not fooled by these advertisements but many are. The rise in sales of the products proves this. What is even more amazing is that even when people know that the champion is only doing it for the money and he never uses that sort of racket and doesn't take those pills, some still buy them. Why is this so?

Television is probably the most powerful of the persuaders. Some people are convinced that everything they see on it is factual and they find it very difficult to believe that even a fictional play being shown isn't real life. The commentator's remarks on sports or activities can be accepted by some people as judgements – 'the final verdict' rather than just an opinion. In some cases of course it can be very well informed opinion. Some programmes, particularly those concerning national or international events, may be watched in almost every household in the country. The World Cup series of football in 1966 is a very good example. People who weren't normally interested in football became caught up in the 'World Cup Fever'. Those concerned with the mass media try to create this sort of atmosphere because it helps sales. Phrases like interest in the final is 'hotting up', or 'reaching fever point' are common. Do you feel this persuasive influence on these occasions and do you think that often it is out of all proportion to the importance of the event? There is sometimes almost the creation of mass hysteria. Perhaps some of the current violence at football matches may have been aided because some people have seen this happening on television programmes and have therefore started it at other grounds. Do you think the media can have any effect on behaviour?

The mass media have more direct effects on the way people use their leisure. Television has been blamed for the reduction in the number of spectators at many major sports. Attendance figures at football, cricket and athletics matches have been amongst the most severely affected. Are there distinct advantages in huge audiences seeing first class games and performers? How valuable is this and would it be better for people to take part more? The full effect of television viewing on the population

has not yet been felt. One report recently stated – ‘American children in some communities spend more hours each day watching television than they do attending school. What kinds of leisure patterns are these youngsters establishing for adulthood?’ Will they be less enterprising and lazier, willing just to watch rather than take an active part? What ‘leisure patterns’ are you establishing and how are they being affected by television?

All the media consult ‘public opinion’. Television can do this more effectively than the others. So, after an important game a ‘regular supporter for many years’ is asked to sum up. He can appear to give a very convincing case to an audience of seventeen million watching that the goal that the referee disallowed was valid. The television network can show supporting film extracts which seem to substantiate the opinion without stating so. Will many people be convinced?

One of the most valuable contributions of the mass media is the constant attention to some aspects of leisure activities. You will see that many newspapers devote two pages to sport. Unfortunately it is rare to see a comparable amount set aside for music, cinema and art in the more popular newspapers. Much of the emphasis is on reports of expert playing or performing, so again this is reinforcing the reader’s role of spectator. Is too much space devoted to sport and particularly to the fortunes of professional clubs, to the neglect of writing about techniques and the amateur local teams?

One of the most significant aspects of the mass media’s treatment of leisure is what can be called the ‘cult of personality’ – the centring of a story or theme on an individual. On the radio, television and in the newspapers you will see that most of the reporting concentrates much of its information around a star or controversial player. There are few days when there is not headline coverage for an individual often over some incident. How does this reporting with emphasis on individuals help games like football, cricket and rugby? Is there the danger that this is out of all proportion to the individual’s worth and that it is ignoring the value of other players who are just as skilled? You may of course be prepared to support this hero worship because it is one of the principal ways of interesting people in the finer points of a sport. But again you ought to check on exactly what the reporters are writing and talking about. So often the information is about personal details, club loyalties, reaction from the crowd, infringements of the laws, arguments with other players and very rarely about techniques. Does this matter?

6

Art, drama and music



Music, drama and art are minority interests. Many people do not understand them nor care about them. They often scorn those who enjoy them. Yet all three are part of everyone's daily life. Humming, whistling, doodling and miming are practised by most people. Quite often considerable energy goes into creating a new tune or drawing on the blotting paper. But is there a link between these actions and 'real' theatre or music? Are the examples given different because they are personal, whereas the others are by experts and therefore cannot be understood? Is the problem one of communication where the artist is expressing feelings in a different form and language from one's own experience? Are 'barriers' to understanding set up because you have been asked to read authors like Shakespeare or Chaucer? Are there so many difficult words that they might as well be written in Chinese? Are some of the ideas often beyond your experience? For instance, you can now understand what might have made no sense at all three years ago. Is this true of some of the art, the music, drama, painting or reading that you are urged to study now by teachers and parents? Is finding the meaning of some so called great works of art and literature a problem? Do you think that some paintings, particularly the abstract ones, are too difficult to explain anyway?

Some people feel very strongly that young people should experience great works of art. They despair at the low standards of the competitive commercial world. They want to see creative work to balance the practical, technical and useful things that surround modern life. They fear that advertisements are overloaded with the cheap, the mass pro-

duced, the instant rather than the lasting. Television rarely shows quality programmes. The people who count the sizes of audiences fear that there will be big losses if there are too many minority interest programmes. Their cynical view is that the audiences do not want and are not willing to try to understand anything that smacks of culture. Arnold Wesker the playwright argues however that audiences should be exposed only to the most professional work – the best. Is this emphasis on the highest standards going to limit the audience? Is he right in suggesting that the cheap and the easy are not satisfactory? Will they give only short lived pleasure that has no depth or value? Are these just second best?

He is strongly against using reading or theatregoing as a way of filling leisure time. This is merely 'makeshift'. Is this better than nothing? Is it essential to fill leisure time with a ten course meal for a book worm? Why not just pick up a book and browse or go to the cinema on the spur of the moment? Are you likely to learn much if you just occupy time haphazardly? Some people are fanatical about their serious interests. They even go as far as pinning up poetry over the mirror to study and learn while they are washing. Quite a lot of people read over the breakfast table or in bed last thing at night. Is this just filling in time and is it time well spent? Is it any deeper than reading in the dentist's waiting room? Breakfast reading may have started with some people as a temporary measure but often becomes a habit. Is it bad reading as well as bad manners?

You do not have to be a budding Laurence Olivier, Richard Burton or Elizabeth Taylor to join the National Youth Theatre. Michael Croft the director describes the sort of person who is accepted:

He may never have acted in his life and maybe he cannot act anyway, but he must have some kind of spark – personality, vitality, sincerity, a bit of fire or feeling about something – qualities you cannot pinpoint till you see them and not always then; and if he has a hint of talent too, so much the better!

Does this describe the 'average' man or does 'having some kind of spark' mean someone exceptional? Do you fit the description? He explains that some are too timid to apply. 'He may be tucked away somewhere in the school football team and think acting is effeminate!' Would you like to suggest to Sean Connery that he looks effeminate? Do people see actors as cissies? Are some people too frightened to take

part? Might you be overlooked as an actor because you are type cast as a sportsman and therefore not thought to be interested? Mr Croft thinks some may have passed unnoticed by the school producer because they cannot speak correctly or do not look the type. 'He may be anti groups of any kind and would not set foot in the theatre if you paid him'.

Arnold Wesker says: 'You read books . . . to share another man's thoughts and experiences'. You have 'a compelling curiosity for a story he has to tell'. But some people read to confirm their prejudices. They state: 'If so and so says it's right then it must be the truth'. For others, their 'compelling curiosity' may be only for an obscene story. Neither really contradicts what Wesker has said but is he describing feelings that most people do not share? He goes on to condemn the attitude that young people should be encouraged to take up a new hobby just for the sake of it. He sees the claim that 'the dears must be occupied' as an insult to teenagers. Is this idea one of the pillars of school organization? How often are you allowed to do just as you like at times other than the lunch break? He claims that whenever people challenge young people they think of physical challenge—struggling up an Everest or a run round the park. He maintains that a new idea, an artist's experiment in colour or a composer's new symphony are just as great achievements. Are they, or do people choose the physical challenge because they think it easier than the cultural? Or is it because many people are suspicious of exceptional and rare talents? Are they easily persuaded that they can only grasp what is simple and straightforward?

An 'indoors Outward Bound, minus fresh air and sleep' was the way one of the young people who worked as a technician on the tour of Italy described the National Youth Theatre. For him the experiences in this theatre were as hard as any vigorous climbing and running.

Does the theatre and particularly the National Youth Theatre provide an outlet for those young people whom the 'average' youth club does not attract? Are many local opportunities of encouraging such interests being lost because people assume that you cannot be bothered? Does the theatre seem too technical, skilled and highly organized and therefore not appeal to lively people who enjoy having fun but may not think they can act? Does your idea of acting consist of learning lines, movements and stage directions? Drama should be more exciting than this. Situation drama for instance consists of discussing a plot and then creating the words of the play as you go along. In this way people can experience what it is like to play on a stage in front of an audience. They will not be put off

by having to learn long speeches which they do not fully understand. Getting over the first experience may encourage them to go on to something more difficult.

It has been suggested that some people do not value the arts because they don't have to pay for them. They can visit most galleries free and can listen to music on the radio. Is this attitude encouraged at school by sending you to watch a play you have been studying for exams? Understandably you may already be thoroughly bored with it. Is the mistake of sending you without prior preparation just as foolish? Does the way in which you are introduced to a subject make any difference to whether or not you understand and enjoy it?

Have record players and transistor radios made people into listeners rather than players? How many in your class have these items and how many can play musical instruments? How important is it to listen to music? Arnold Wesker says: 'You listen to music because without it your spirit must dry and shrivel'. Is it fair to conclude that the deaf have dry and shrivelled spirits? Are people who always have their transistors turned on to a pop programme lively and exciting? He means of course that the listener must be completely absorbed in the music. The kind of music may not matter. He sees music as 'a release, a stimulant'. This can apply to either serious music or pop. The first is usually more complicated in structure than the second but the effect on individuals may be the same. You can be 'sent' (emotionally involved) at a concert or a beat session. Is there any difference in the way in which you become involved in the two types of music? Do you have to think more about serious music than pop? Should we judge music by how much you have to think about it to understand it?

Wesker also sees music as 'a need - like a blast of fresh air'. He has made it appear like a drug you cannot do without. Why do you need it? Is it essential to cheer you up, to change your mood? Or do you use it to reflect your feelings? He sees music has more than 'a mere noise to fill the silence between bored bites of food'. Music is however often used as a background to other activities. It can be used to create atmosphere in films and plays. But in clubs for young people it can be just a background of noise, often as loud as possible. Would it be better to vary this music not by selecting favourite pop stars but by choosing music to create moods? If the club was to play an important game should suitably stirring music be chosen? In America many schools have their own bands and cheer leaders whose main purpose is to support the

school teams. Does music on these occasions give you more encouragement to win? Military music obviously creates the pace for marching, from the tempo of the slow funeral march to the swaggering goose step. Does it also blot out other feelings? Does the roll of drums, when it is time to charge at the enemy, drive away fear?

Some schools have music playing during the lunch time or as a background to lessons. Will music at these times increase the understanding and enjoyment of it, or will it just be another noise that you get used to? Should it be useful? Some women maintained that 'Housewives' Choice' a mid-morning music programme, helped them to do their work. Why? Did the music just make them feel happier, or did it make them think less about the work they were doing? Some people think that music played in cars while you are driving is dangerous because it distracts your attention. For instance, have you ever seen someone pumping the accelerator or the footbrake to the tune of Colonel Bogey?

Electronic musical instruments make it easy to create a wide range of sound with only a few chords. Has this reduced the willingness of many people to learn to play properly? Or has it enabled many more people to make a satisfying (to themselves) noise that they otherwise would not have been able to do? A lecturer Donald Hughes thinks that beat music has given young people a means of musical expression which is comparatively simple to perform. He considers that the post war popularity of skiffle caused this. A skiffle group consisted of a number of home made instruments. These included a washboard which was played with thimble clad fingers, an instrument like a double bass consisting of a single string stretched between a broom handle and a tea chest sound box and a variety of bells and hooters. These seem very primitive compared with the complex equipment now used by groups. They cost the players very little to make. Part of the enjoyment was gained from making the instruments and adding more weird examples to the collection. Eventually the commercial interests realized that this promised to be a good market for selling more complicated equipment and using the talents of the young people for the mass media. Skiffle developed in two ways. The commercial interests produced simpler rock and roll while surprisingly there also developed a growing number of young people interested in genuine folk music. The two main streams still exist. The folk music, with the aid of the mass media, has become a powerful tool of the present protest movement. Beat music still tends to rely on its rhythm rather than its words for effect. Some of the present themes of

these folk songs are about war, colour prejudice and crime. How many can you think of on these subjects? How effective are they in making you think about real issues? Are they more effective than books and news broadcasts?

Folk songs and poetry are closely related and it is quite common to hold festivals of poetry and folk music. Poetry readings usually tend to be a minority interest. Yet many more people are prepared to listen when they are presented as part of a folk concert. Why is this so? Are people put off by the thought that poetry is only for the highbrows? Why should you take an interest in the artistic and creative things?

Professor Jeffreys suggests there is little value in reading books for exams because you merely make notes and learn what you think will please the examiner. He sees 'experiencing as a different thing from memorizing facts'. He argues that the important principle is to 'Do it yourself'. You should have every chance to try your hand at a variety of arts and crafts; woodwork, pottery, dance, music and drama. The purpose is not to achieve a high level of skill. He sees the mastery of at least one art or craft as of great value in building up the personality. Do you agree with this? Do you feel you have gained something from taking part in a new activity? Do you think learning to paint gives you a sense of identity – more knowledge about yourself?

If you try your hand at a wide variety of skills it doesn't matter if you do not like them or are no good at them. He is disagreeing with Arnold Wesker who condemns the idea that young people should be encouraged to take new hobbies for the sake of it. Who is right?

Professor Jeffreys goes on to explain that real understanding of an art or craft cannot be gained by theoretical study of works of art. Real understanding only comes from practical experience. You can watch a potter and you can understand the theory. It looks easy when you see the pot growing between his fingers but you only learn how difficult it is when you try. How important is it to experience failure when you try something? Do you learn something about yourself? Do you get a sense of your own merit? Does failure spur you on to try again or do you give up? Is the best way to learn through trying yourself?

Will you get more, as Professor Jeffreys suggests, out of a visit to the site of a Roman villa and watching the archaeologist work than from all the books and photographs about it? Is there a place however for watching the expert once you have gained some experience of a skill? How else can you learn new techniques and better quality workmanship?

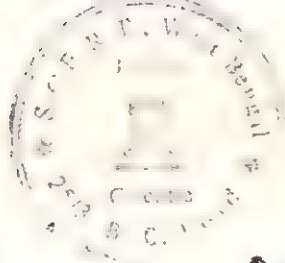
He maintains that it is essential to see the best in art or craft – the really good original painting, hear good music well played or see a Shakespeare play well staged and acted. Are these only suitable for the experts? What is the good of setting these high standards when so much of what can be seen on television and heard on the radio is well below them? How does it affect those people who prefer pop? He claims that reproduction paintings are misleading unless one knows how to make allowances for the difference between reproduction and the original. Does this really matter? If someone likes a reproduction should not that be sufficient? It may be quite an achievement for some even to consider buying a reproduction. Is there a danger of putting them off art if you say 'Well of course it is not as good as the original'? Is it ridiculous to discuss such high standards when people cannot afford to buy originals? Would it be better to take much more care in framing and displaying members of the family's or your own paintings at home rather than a good reproduction? What do you think about your parents' attitude to your art anyway? Is it critical or is it embarrassingly full of praise? Do they notice or care?

Professor Jeffreys thinks that young people should have a chance to see well designed furniture and china 'to compare good design with bad and realize that the most expensive things are not necessarily the best designed'. This sounds very good advice but most people buy furniture when they first get married and they have not much money to spare then. They may have no alternative but to buy the very cheapest. Does the quality or design vary with the price?

How important is it to develop individual skills and wider interests to make the most of leisure? Do you need to compare your work with the highest standards to achieve your best?

7

Making the most of leisure



How should you spend your leisure time? The choice must essentially be your own. How do you choose? Well you could look at how you have spent your time so far. Have you felt satisfied that it has been worthwhile? There may have been opportunities that you are sorry you did not grasp and those that you are glad you did not miss. Have you a regular hobby which takes up a lot of your time? You may have the enthusiasm for fishing of the boy who wrote the following:

I reckon this sport takes a lot of beating. The country air down your lungs and the quietness of the countryside does me better than all the medicines out. The reason I like it so much is because of the relaxation.

There is nothing more enjoyable than getting up early in the morning and setting out for a day by the river. It doesn't really matter if I catch anything for I just like to sit there on the river bank where it is quiet and peaceful.

My pastime is in two main ways. The first during the week is dating girls. This gives me almost as much pleasure as my main sport, if you can call girls a hobby, fishing or angling which is the correct definition of the sport. I don't know of anything better than to be by the river matching your skill against the skill, craft and cunning of the fish you hope to get. The feeling of excitement which builds up inside you as the fish takes the bait in his mouth matches favourably the feeling I get when I take a gorgeous girl in my arms, but I consider fishing as my main sport. When you think of it fish-

ing for fish and fishing for girls are very similar. For instance when you get ready to go out at night you doll yourself up to attract the girls. Only it is a little easier than catching fish because the girls also set out with sometimes only one purpose in mind.

He has suggested that for him fishing is valuable because of the 'relaxation', 'the matching of skill with the fish', and 'the excitement that a bite arouses'. How important is relaxation? What does it mean anyway? Does it mean sitting quietly in peaceful surroundings or merely a change of activity from the normal noise and rush of daily work? Do you need to relax and if so how do you go about it?

He also gains satisfaction from improving his fishing skill. This involves long practice and wide knowledge. But is continuing improvement necessary to the enjoyment of an interest?

The third factor that was important for this fisherman was the 'excitement that a bite arouses'. If you are a fisherman you will know that bites are infrequent and on some days rare or non-existent. Is this excitement an essential ingredient of leisure activities? Does scoring a bull's eye, a goal, painting a scene or playing a difficult piece of music have similar excitement?

The lad who enjoyed fishing has highlighted three important aspects of leisure; relaxation, skill and excitement. He appears to find them in one hobby although he may have more. Do you agree that these are the most important factors? He did not mention sharing his interest with other people. He has included dating girls - 'if you can call girls a hobby'. Well should you include them? Do some boys regard girls as another form of collecting, where the object is to get as many as possible? Do girls on the other hand think of a boyfriend as a 'status symbol' to be caught as soon as possible? Once the boy has been caught do the girls give up their own leisure interests to follow his?

The fisherman has emphasized getting 'country air down your lungs'. Adults have urged this for generations. It has been one of the main reasons for camping trips into the fields and the hills. Medical evidence shows that the human lungs of city dwellers are grey in colour because of city grime whereas country people's are pink. But will a weekend camping or a fortnight's holiday in the country really do any good? Does he mean there are many other benefits of the countryside? If so, what are they and how do they help you? Are putting on weight, getting rosy cheeks or a suntan to be prized?

Many attempts have been made to list the things which will interest young people. One report suggested that you are looking for opportunities to meet friends and fresh faces, to develop friendships and respect and tolerance for one another. Does this suggest that you want to spend a lot of time in groups? For many of you quite the reverse could be true. You may wish to spend your leisure time getting away from the usual crowd of friends. If you choose to be in groups is there a danger of you being seen as stereotypes – that all the young people in the group behave in a similar way? Do you prefer to be different?

The ingredients of making young people's leisure more interesting are sometimes listed under three headings: 'association, training and challenge'. They sound as if they are carved on tablets of stone. Perhaps some adults do preach them as if you are being urged to take an assault course in instant adulthood. 'Association' (fellowship) has already been discussed. The importance of friendship is taken for granted. Should you have opportunities for training – chances not just to improve physical performance but also social skills? For instance, attitudes to job, preparation for marriage and homemaking could be included. Is it worthwhile learning how to keep your husband happy? Are your friends going to be interested in learning how to give 'the kiss of life' in case you need it? Do you think they should know how to do it? If 'training' is important what should it consist of? 'How to become a millionaire in ten easy lessons' was one boy's suggestion. 'How to avoid the mistakes my parents made in bringing up children' was another proposal. Would your emphasis be on practical skills or would you want opportunities to learn about wider issues in life?

'Challenge' was the third heading. There are plenty of challenges in everyday life; how to make the wages last, how to keep the boss happy, how to catch the bus in time for work. Do you need any more and if so what should they be? Should they include responsibility for organizing and leading other people? Should they be quite different from your normal activities?

How important is foreign travel as a challenge? The majority of young people go abroad in groups, but there are some individuals who go on their own or with one other friend. Is any new experience likely to be a challenge, or do some, like foreign travel, have many more problems to be overcome? If you decide to take a holiday abroad there are all the formalities of getting passports, visas, tickets and booking accommodation. There are also the problems of making yourself understood and

learning the value of the currency. A major challenge can be the problem of learning the language. Would you bother to do it?

How realistic was the report in wanting to see, 'the growth of hiking and cycling abroad, the use of youth hostels and rough going by cargo boat'? At what age can you expect to be allowed to do these things and do you think that they are interesting anyway? The report suggests that 'young people have little stomach for sightseeing'. What would you want to go abroad for; to meet the foreign girls or boys? Are you willing, as the report says 'to enjoy the foreign atmosphere' and would you be willing to 'ferret out information about the places you visit' as it also assumes?

Should the challenges be much harder than the ones listed? Should they be concerned with trying to solve some of the world's problems? Would you get more out of your leisure if you were helping to feed the starving or overcome other people's and your own prejudices? Are challenges seen so often as things which are remote and outside our experiences when there are so many nearer to home? Do we spend too much time thinking about theoretical problems like 'what is the purpose of life' and not enough time on making life easier for those who have difficulties?

Some people think that making the most of leisure consists of spending a lot of time on their own appearance. One Scottish 15-year-old thought this was what older people did not understand about teenagers. 'Their idea of fashion is rotten, they want you to wear big baggy trousers and big knotted ties and big daft shoes which we called beetle crushers'.

He is obviously a frustrated 'Dedicated Follower of Fashion'. He probably gets a lot of satisfaction from taking pride in the few fashionable clothes he may have acquired despite his parents. But has boys' interest in clothes now gone so far as to appear effeminate? Do they spend too much time thinking about what they wear? Is this a good use of leisure?

The fashion magazines urge girls to spend hours on makeup and money on wardrobe changes while they alter the hemline like the rise and fall of the tide. Some girls take a long time getting ready to go out. They take so much trouble over their hair that they dare not do anything when they do go out for fear of disturbing it. They will talk at great length about fashion, makeup and hairstyles. The object of this beauty care is to catch a boy. Once they have got him then they will spend hours

talking about him as well as continuing the beauty work. They may have no interests apart from their appearance and their boyfriend. What are they going to talk about when they are wedded to 'the catch' for life? Do some wrecked marriages and broken love affairs happen because there is nothing in common to talk about? Is there any point in making an effort to develop an interest which you can discuss with other people? Would it be any use if you had to move to another town when you left school?

Is there such a thing as 'the art of conversation' and should it be developed? Are people too easily convinced that 'silence is golden' and that when someone talks too much he is just trying to impress? One 14-year-old explained that the reason he did not say much was that he thought no one was interested in what he liked. This could have been a vicious circle because the people he was with may have felt the same. Some people do talk too much, but you should be able to tell, if you are watching the faces of people you are with, whether they are listening or not. It's surprising how many people get to the stage of saying 'You were not listening, you were asleep'. This usually indicates that they were just talking without any feeling for the listener. How can you avoid boring people?

The talker is often described as someone 'who likes the sound of his own voice'. He is proud and vain. Vanity takes some strange forms. The boxer who describes himself as the 'Greatest' may be stating a fact. If he wears a badge which states on it 'I'm the Greatest' then he might be thought rather vain.

A fairly new hobby is the collecting of badges which pronounce such things as 'All the way with LBJ', 'Make love not war'. Quite an interesting collection can be made which could have considerable historical and social significance. These could be just as valuable as stamp, match box or cheese label collections. If you collect any of these interesting items long enough then you will almost certainly make a profit when you sell them. One form of collecting less easy to understand is that of car numbers. Sir Gerald Nabarro has eight vehicles in his family fleet and he has collected the whole NAB series from 1 to 8. A single letter (one of the earliest registrations) followed by a 1 is worth more than £1 000. A1 fetched £2 500 for charity. Why are people prepared to pay so much for these? Usually it is to spell out their initials or part of their surname, but you can probably think of other examples that you have seen. Every registration number is unique; why then should these be any more

valuable? If you want your name to be prominent why not paint it all over the car?

People who spend considerable time and money in search of these single numbers usually have other status symbols as well. The numbers are often to be seen on large or conspicuous cars. The same people may have unusual dogs or clothes. They appear to be self confident and know what they enjoy doing.

You yourself might well have strong individual tastes and enjoy doing some things which other people scorn. Does it sometimes require courage to continue when parents cannot understand your interest and friends pull your leg about it? You may play a musical instrument, act in the school play or enjoy debating. If so you are likely to be in a minority. From time to time you will have a very important part to play. What will you do though when you leave school? Unless you are very good you are unlikely to be able to step into a similar important position in an adult club or society. They may not even exist outside school. But even if they do there will be few opportunities for you to continue in as important a role as you had before. You may find that you have to start at the bottom again. For instance, if you join a drama group you cannot expect to get a part straight away. You may have to work very hard as a scene shifter and painter. People who are already in the group will want to get to know you well to reassure themselves that you are prepared to work hard before they give you a part.

Interests are sometimes developed at school which cannot easily be continued when you leave. They may just not exist outside school. This is a great pity because once you stop practising something it may not be easy to start again. The only solution may be to form a club or society of your own. The interest formed at school in modern dancing, poetry or music can be kept alive by regular practice and performances. The same will be true once you have left school. There are plenty of people who enjoy such performances. Hospitals, old people's homes and the clubs for the handicapped welcome as many shows as can be provided.

It is easy to suggest that you should try to keep up these interests but not so easy to achieve. You will leave school at different times and many of you will go away. Nevertheless even a very small group of you might find it worthwhile to see what demands there are in the area for the kind of entertainment you can offer. Who could you ask that might be interested?

Some interests are more difficult to follow than others. It is no good

wanting to collect vintage cars or rare gold coins if you have no money. It will be difficult to learn to fly an aircraft or sail a boat if there is no one to teach you. There may be no club, society or evening class in the subject that you want to study. Even quite simple things can become difficult to do when you leave school. You could be keen on carving or sculpture and have plenty of space and tools for your use in the school woodwork room. When you leave school there may be nowhere suitable. Mother may not welcome plaster of Paris or wood chippings on the kitchen table. How can you solve this problem? You may not be able to find a solution but it might be worthwhile asking a monumental mason, a farmer, a builder or a garage proprietor if they have got some space you could use. It would be interesting to see what response you got from a survey asking people whether they would be willing to let young people use their garage, sheds, workshops, meadows, tools for a variety of activities.

In some areas evening classes exist where you may be able to continue your interest. You may think that they are only for older people. In fact they are usually open to anyone over the age of 14 and fees are modest for those at school. The proportion of young people in these can be as high as 50 percent although it is usually about 25 percent. The size of the evening centre will determine how many classes can be provided. If there are enough of you wanting to do a particular course, then almost certainly it will be arranged. If you have not been to a centre before, part of your investigation of local facilities should perhaps include an organized visit.

Information about what is taking place in a community is always difficult to obtain. One of the best sources is usually the public library. It sometimes has an up to date list of the week's events. It may also keep a catalogue of the local clubs and societies. This is usually in the reference section. If it has no list of this kind you could organize a project to compile one. The library would be delighted to have it.

There is no need to give details here of the kind of books the library will have on interests and activities. It is always worthwhile asking the librarian's advice because books may not be catalogued in the section you think they should be.

From whom can you get advice on leisure opportunities and activities? You may be able to think of someone you could ask. There may be a member of staff at school who has responsibility for out of school activities. There may be a local youth leader. If not the youth officer for

the county or borough is the person to ask. All these people should be able to tell you where to find out information if they cannot supply it. They will be able to give you lists of courses that are arranged, what equipment can be borrowed and give advice on whether certain courses are suitable. Further details about particular interests may be obtained from the organizations listed at the back of this book. Their addresses can be obtained from the youth officer, London telephone directories or the telephone directory enquiries as most of them are in London. Writing to a specialist society is not going to be an 'open sesame' to a life full of exciting things to do but you may like to consider whether it is worth writing to find out what they have to offer.

Times are changing



How much better off financially are people today than they were fifty or more years ago? Someone in their seventies might tell you that he earned only 2s 6d a week whereas the average weekly wage today is over £15. The real value can only be calculated by comparing the cost of a number of products then and now. How have wages and prices changed? You could get some idea by asking people of different ages what they earned when they first went to work and how much it cost them to live at that time.

If people are better off now what difference has it made? Some suggest that it has meant that more money is spent on leisure. Is this true? From the increase in the number of cars on the road it would appear so. What other changes have taken place? You might ask your parents or grandparents to list other things which they have been able to afford or which have become available only in recent years. These could be included under headings such as transport, holidays, hobbies and outings.

What effect has the shorter working week had on people's leisure? Retired people will tell you that they had to work ten or twelve hours a day seven days a week. In 1955 the average working week was 45 hours compared with 42 hours in 1965. In some areas workers prefer to work longer each day so that they have a four day working week instead of five. This can occur in some industries when ten hour shifts are operated. What difference does shift work make to the enjoyment of leisure? Because not all members of the family will be able to spend their leisure together will they lose some of the pleasure, particularly if the father or mother has to work every second or third weekend?

The size of families has become smaller during this century. What effect will this have had on how much money families have to spend on leisure activities?

Couples get married much younger now than before the Second World War. Wives are now more likely to go to work before they have children and to return when the babies are old enough to go to school or for someone else to look after them. Labour saving devices in the home make housework much easier. How do these changes affect the leisure of the family? Does it mean that the wife will really be doing two jobs: her full time or part time work plus the housework and looking after the family? If wives do go out to work what part should husbands take in helping in the home? Should they share equally with their wives all the household chores?

Another tradition, besides the one that the woman's place is in the home, has been that the husband should be free occasionally in the evenings and at weekends to spend his time with the 'boys' while the wife stays at home with the children. Is this still acceptable when the wives have also spent a day at work and need relaxation?

Eighty percent of the population live in towns of more than 50 000 and the proportion is increasing. To solve the housing problem in cities many more blocks of high flats are being built. Does living in what have been described as 'vertical filing cabinets for human beings' cause any changes in recreational activities? It is easy to see that mothers might be very reluctant to let their young children play on the ground when they are on the twenty-third floor. How will the young people be affected though? Will they feel a loneliness in blocks of flats that they don't experience when living in a two storey terraced house?

You are more and more likely to live in lodgings or a flat if you move away from home when you leave school. What will be the problems of leisure that will face you then? At first it may be difficult to make friends because you know so few people. If you are in lodgings the landlady may not like you entertaining friends. It may take some time before you learn where the cinemas, dance halls, clubs, theatres and best meeting places are. How easy will it be for you to join in these? Will you feel strange and perhaps nervous, or will you be able to take these new experiences in your stride?

Because more people are moving into or working in the cities and big towns transport is a growing problem. Uneconomic railway lines have been closed in rural areas. Buses rarely run to remote villages at con-

venient times. Even in the cities themselves buses may not run very late to the suburbs where you live. How do these restrictions in travelling affect your leisure? Do they mean that you must rush out of the cinema as soon as the film is over or leave well before the end of the dance so that you can catch the last bus home? It now seems almost essential to solve transport problems by owning a car. Many families now have at least one car but this again is quite a recent development. What has the car meant to families? It has been described as 'another living room on wheels' meaning that families use them not so much as a means of transport but as a centre for their leisure. An example of this is the family which drives to the seaside and then spends the day in the car on the front watching the sea. The Americans have had drive-in cinemas for a long time. The weather will probably discourage such a development here.

Some young people are buying a car as soon as they can get a driving licence. A few years ago the aim would have been to buy a motorcycle but this has changed. Is this because people have become more aware of the risks of injury on motorcycles? Are cars cheaper than they were? Have teenagers' wages gone up or are hire purchase arrangements easier?

What difference has hire purchase made in other ways to the enjoyment of leisure? It is possible now to fly to America or Hongkong or go on a long sea cruise and pay by instalments, as well as buy almost any goods on hire purchase. Do you think 'buy now pay later' has encouraged people to spend much more freely, particularly on enjoying themselves?

One of the biggest booms in recent years has been the increase in spending on gambling. How many betting shops or what are called 'Turf Accountants' are there in your town? How many were there before 1966 when the Government made it easier to open them? How many bingo clubs are there and how often are they open? Why do people join bingo clubs now rather than go to whist drives that were popular fifteen years ago? Is this a case of changing fashions?

Bingo does not attract many teenagers. Why is this? Many enjoy fun-fairs, amusement arcades and pintables. What is so attractive about these? Is it the bright lights, the opportunity just to 'drop in', the freedom to choose what you want to do? Or is it the fun of playing with what appear to be complicated machines? Three-quarters of the money spent in France on juke boxes, machines for electrical billiards, mechanical football games and the like comes from people between 14 and 21 years old.

Eighty-five to ninety percent of those using the machines are boys. Since 1956 the number of these machines in cafés has increased four-fold. A similar boom has occurred in this country. Pintables and one arm bandits exist in many cafés, clubs and funfairs. Why are they so popular? Is it because people have got more money than they need for useful things? Why so few girls? Is it because they have less money? Do they spend more on other things like clothes, makeup and hairdos? Or have they more sense than to waste money on these amusements?

The seaside attracted people for their holidays even before the motor car was invented. But it is only during the past fifty years that it has been possible for so many people to go there. The main reasons are that it is only in this century that workers have adequate paid holidays and wages to make this possible. About four times as many people take holidays now as in 1935. An increasing number are taking two each year. This trend is likely to grow rapidly.

Another factor that led to the increase in holidays by the sea was the opening of holiday camps such as those pioneered by Sir Billy Butlin after the Second World War. Inexpensive holidays could be enjoyed by far more people. Caravans for hire at modest prices for short periods of time meant families could cater for themselves almost as cheaply as at home. The present trend is for an increasing number of people to buy their own caravans and to tow them behind their cars. There has also been a considerable increase in camping holidays as equipment has become lighter and more compact with the use of new man made fibres. What are the effects of these large caravan and camp sites on coastal regions? Some cover enormous areas of land and there is growing demand for more sites. Should more space be made available or do they spoil the seaside? What are the alternatives? Should skyscraper holiday flats be built instead?

Some groups are very worried about the present spread of caravans, amusement parks, beach huts and other seaside facilities. Societies like the National Trust, Nature Conservancy, The Wild Life Trust and the Society for the Protection of Birds consider that wild life and scenic beauty are in danger of being destroyed. They argue that areas should be protected. Do you think it is fair to do this? Are there enough bird watchers and naturalists to justify it? Does it matter that in the past fifty years over forty species of animals and birds have become extinct and many others are in danger of joining them? There is always an outcry against the annual killing of young seals yet this may be necessary

to prevent there being too many of them for the food available. But there isn't the same concern if rare birds and animals are driven from their natural surroundings by building and holidaymakers.

It is not just at the seaside that the countryside is being used up. Parts of the rural areas are being altered by the building of housing estates, motorways and factories. What are the results of this? How much land has been built on in your area in the last ten years and what changes has it caused? Do you have to go further to get to the countryside? Are there fewer places for walks in fields? If you live in the middle of a big city you might not have noticed any changes.

Do you care if 500 footpaths disappeared in 1967 and are still going at the rate of three a day? They once had a purpose in linking farms, villages and hamlets but most are no longer needed for this. Are the farmers right in ploughing them up or letting the bull run loose on them to frighten the walker? Or should the Ramblers' Association continue to try to protect them? Can we afford the luxury of protecting certain birds, animals and paths to leave land just for leisure?

Water is also scarce, although from the fact that it always flows from the tap when you turn it you may not think so. There are many demands for it, for domestic, industrial and recreational use. Should more reservoirs be made available for water sports? At present many are not used because of the danger of pollution. Is this a real fear? It certainly does not seem to be because a number of new reservoirs have been opened with opportunities for water sports.

What are the popular water sports at the present time and how many of them are available in your area? Swimming has always been enjoyed by many people as has angling. In recent years however many of what have previously been thought of as 'rich men's sports' have been taken up by a wider section of the population. Is it because people have more time and are financially better off? Or is it because interests have changed?

So rapidly are these sports growing that more areas of water with boat landing points and club facilities are needed. But should government finances be available for these interests which are still minority ones? How do you sort out who should have the rights to a particular stretch of water? The sailors, anglers, powerboat and water skiing enthusiasts very often get in one another's way. How do you solve the problem of giving them a fair share of the space without causing confusion?

Is there any water near your home and if so is it suitable to swim in? Or is it like so many rivers and ponds polluted by chemicals and soaps? A number of other leisure activities are affected: fishing will be poor and canoeing may not be much fun if you have to paddle your way through soap suds. The unpleasant smells don't encourage strolls along the river bank. Water pollution has now become a national problem. One newspaper reported that in some areas in Europe and the United States there is a danger of pollution causing disease and even death. What is being done to reduce pollution in your area? You could find this out from Water Board Officials.

The massive effort that went into clearing up the oil that flowed from the wrecked tanker *Torrey Canyon* cleaned many of the beaches ready for the holidaymakers. But the detergents killed many of the seaweeds, shellfish, sea birds and shore creatures. A recent report suggests that many of these species could have been saved if the oil had been allowed to disappear with the natural action of the sea. It would have taken longer to get the beaches ready for the holidaymakers and some shops and hotels might have found business difficult. What do you think should be done if there is another accident like this? Should the natural life be saved at the expense of the resorts?

Is the country in danger of becoming an ever growing spread of concrete, steel, rubble and clutter? Little thought has been given to the long term effects of industrialization. Coal tips, slagheaps and open cast mines have been left as eyesores. Some work has been done to improve these. But should more money be spent on turning them into attractive areas, suitable for recreation wherever possible? Is it worthwhile planting so many trees in towns when they are likely to be destroyed by vandals? Do people value these and other similar attempts to improve an area, anyway?

The increase in air travel has led to the building of new airports. Large ones like the proposed third London airport bring many problems. Large areas of agricultural land are destroyed. The shape of towns is changed. But one of the most serious problems is that of noise. Obviously it can interfere with the enjoyment of music, reading, listening to the radio or television and holding conversations. But has this to be accepted as the price of progress? Regulations already apply to aircraft noise and they have recently been introduced for motor cars and motorcycles but should these regulations be stricter? The transistor radio like the motorcycle is often controlled deliberately to make as much noise as possible

just for the enjoyment of the owner. What about the effect on other people? Do you think it is fair to create noise that may interfere with other people's quieter ways of enjoying themselves?

What do you think will happen in the future? Are facilities for leisure becoming too organized too much on a large scale? Is the person with a rare and special interest being squeezed out because of conflicting interests of larger groups of people or commercial profit? Or will the present scientific and technological advances make opportunities for leisure so much easier and more exciting? Are they likely to be running excursions round the moon or submarine day trips to the depths of the ocean? Will jet airliners and hovercraft give opportunities for frequent and cheap holidays in distant, unexplored countries?

Electronic machines can already produce unusual musical sounds and computers can compose tunes and symphonies. Does this mean that people will gradually not bother to learn to play instruments or to write music?

Computers are at present 'only in their infancy but even now they can beat man at gambling, predict the results of league sports competitions and fly and land aircraft. Does this mean that soon many of the things which man enjoys doing will be done by computers?

Despite many technical advances in the twentieth century there are still some ways in which men enjoy themselves that seem to some people to be uncivilized and barbaric. Fox, stag and otter hunting and hare coursing continue with much support. It was reported recently that even illegal cock fights were still being held. What do you think should be decided about these in the future? Are they acceptable to modern man?

You will have seen in this chapter that the issues of leisure in modern society are becoming more complicated. Early chapters have posed some of the questions. Solutions have not been offered either because they may not exist or because they are a matter of individual choice. If the discussion has caused you to ask more questions as well as suggest answers then it may have helped you think about your own leisure. What conclusions have you come to about the way you spend your leisure now?

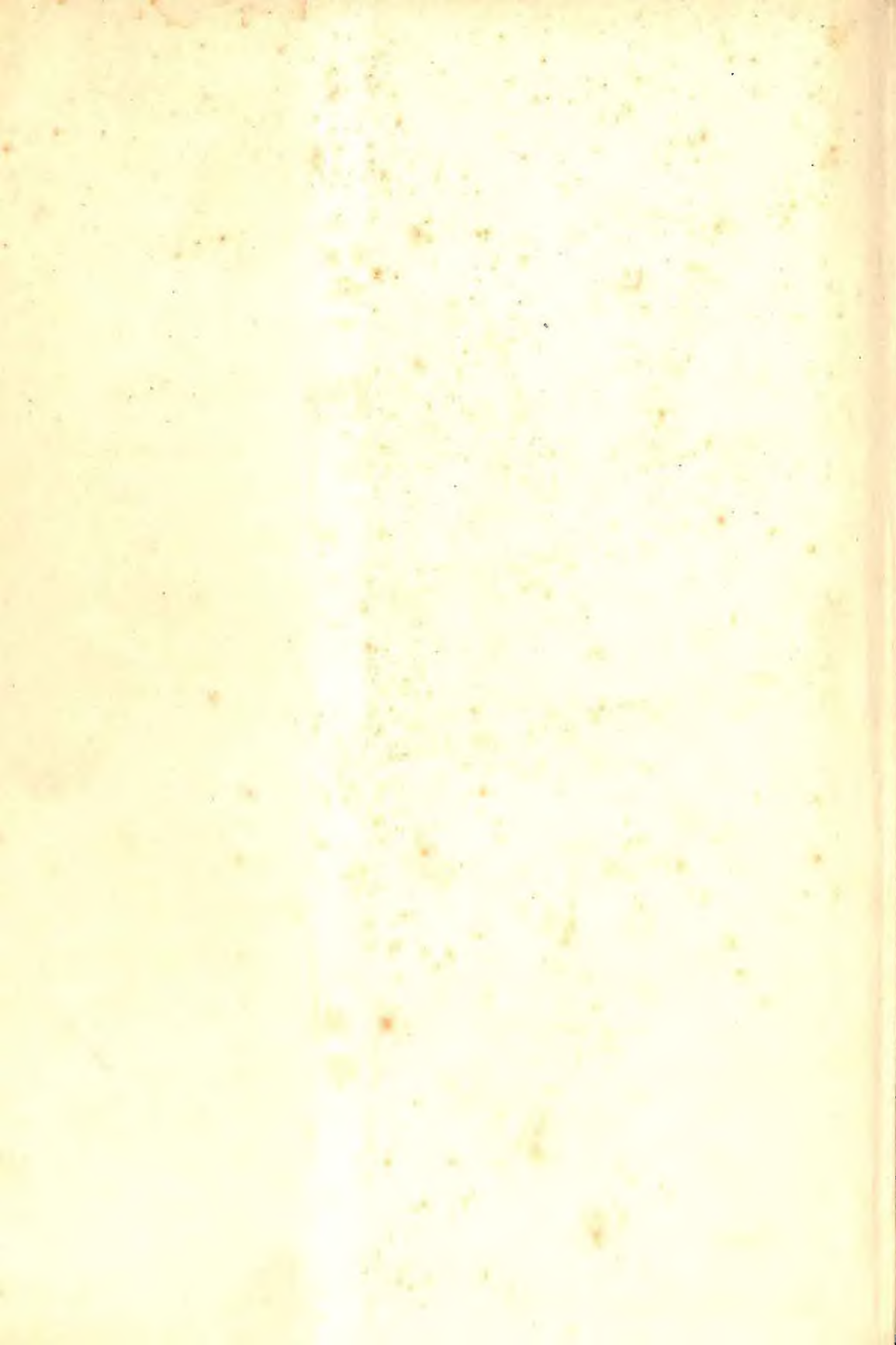
Appendix

Some names of useful Associations and Organizations

Amateur Athletic Association	Camping Club of Great Britain and Ireland
Amateur Boxing Association	Catholic Youth Service Council
Amateur Fencing Association	Central Council of Physical Recreation
Amateur Football Association	Church of England Youth Council
Amateur Gymnastics Association	Civic Trust
Amateur Swimming Association	Climbers' Club
Air Training Corps	Community Service Volunteers
Army Cadet Force Association	Council for Nature
Association of Ballet Clubs	Cyclists' Touring Club
Association for Jewish Youth	Duke of Edinburgh's Award
Association of Weight Lifters	English Table Tennis Association
Badminton Association of England	Girl Guides' Association
Boys' Brigade	Girls' Brigade
Boy Scouts Association	Girls' Friendly Society
British Bee Keepers' Association	International Voluntary Service
British Canoe Union	Methodist Association of Youth Clubs
British Cycling Federation	Mountaineering Association
British Field Sports Society	National Association of Boys' Clubs
British Gliding Association	National Association of Youth Clubs
British Horse Society	National Federation of Young Farmers' Clubs
British Judo Association	National Smallbore Rifle Association
British Junior Naturalists' Association	
British Mountaineering Council	
British Philatelic Association	
British Red Cross Society	
British School Exploring Society	
British Sub-Aqua Club	

National Youth Orchestra
National Youth Theatre
Ocean Youth Club
Outward Bound Trust
Photographic Information
Council Ltd
Royal Society for the Protection
of Birds
Salvation Army

Sail Training Association
St John Ambulance Brigade
Sea Cadet Corps
Standing Conference of National
Voluntary Youth Organizations
Young Men's Christian Association
Young Women's Christian
Association
Youth Hostels' Association



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